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The December number of THE SMART SET will contain:

"Miss Fitzmaurice, Debutante," by Frank Lee Benedict

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*Among the other contributors to the December number will be: Maurice Francis Egan, E. Phillips Oppenheim
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THE CORNER IN COFFEE

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

THE SUITORS OF MISS LIVINGSTONE

MISS CONSTANCE VAN BENTHUYSEN LIVINGSTONE had reached the agreeable age of thirty-five. Of ancient lineage, ample fortune, assured station, she would have been able, under any circumstances, easily to take a leading position in the highest society, had these been her only qualifications for leadership. When to these mundane advantages were added a striking beauty of face and figure, the charm of a cultivated mind, the sparkle of a delicate wit, and an ineffable grace and graciousness, heritage of generations of courtly and distinguished ancestors, it is easy to see why her belleship in New York's most exclusive circles had for many years been undisputed.

Why Miss Livingstone had not married long since was a profound mystery to herself, to her many friends and acquaintances, and to the general public as well, which avidly read everything that appeared about her in the society columns of the daily papers—and it must be admitted that the items were many and the items were long that treated of her doings. Certainly her state of single blessedness—if blessed it were!—was not due to lack of opportunity to change it, nor was it due to any inability on her part to conceive the necessary affection for the opposite sex, nor was the opposite sex to blame, either.

Indeed, Miss Livingstone had been in love many times; she had been definitely engaged twice, and indefinitely more times than that; and she had been loved by—even she herself could not

tell how many men! It was truly rare that one so entirely available as she from a material and personal standpoint, had entered the matrimonial market. Nor was she out of it yet. Age—for thirty-five may properly be so called—she herself admitted, had not withered her; nor had the fact that she had been the custom of many seasons staled her infinite variety. And there were not lacking many who, from various motives but with much truth, said that she was more charming, delectable and desirable now than ever.

Attrition with the great and gay world, the admiration of many men, the adoration of a few, bitter experiences with two—an English marquis and an Italian prince—while they had modified her character, had not robbed her either of her freshness or of her sincerity. The subtle, evanescent charm of youth and innocence had left her, it is true, in the departed years; but there had been added to her character a ripeness and completeness which more than compensated for the loss. For the rest, she had been everywhere, seen everything, done everything. She knew society as well as she knew her A, B, C's. She had read much in the practical literature of life and experience, and it is a tribute to her native buoyancy and good sense that she did not turn from it in disgust. She had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge and still lived in the Garden of Eden—the social Eden of her day. She was too sane to give it up—yet!

But she had, in a large measure, abdicated her social leadership. She had generously yielded the first place,

which she might have retained as long as Diana of Poitiers or Ninon de Lenclos, to younger aspirants for the favor of the small but very madding crowd of social celebrities. She had withdrawn from the world a while of late, but not altogether. She was tired, just a little, not of life, but of society. She had tried it faithfully, and found that after all there was little in it for her. She had not reached the stage of renunciation, however, but from the lofty pose of experience and with a touch of satiety, she contemplated it with a growing sense of distance.

She was not without ardent suitors even yet. The first of these in point of social standing was the Honorable Reginald Kentigern Killegrew de Bevoise Smith-Pogis, the eldest son and heir of the Right Honorable John William Smith-Pogis—born Smith, purchased Pogis—first Baron Revelstone. This gallant youth, who had reached the advanced age of twenty-four, and had all the youthful Englishman's inexperience of mature life, was wildly, passionately—and hopelessly—devoted to Miss Livingstone. Disparity in years made no difference to him. He was, and always would be, her slave. The Honorable Reginald Kentigern Killegrew's father was a man more wealthy than he was noble. Cynics used to say that the bottle, or the vat, should have been prominent on his coat of arms, for he had made a vast fortune by brewing the ale when it is brown, to the great delectation of the temperate Englishmen.

Another prominent suitor was Mr. Cunninghame Cutter, of Cutter, Drewitt & Co., a leading firm, perhaps the leading firm, of coffee brokers in New York. Mr. Cutter did not belong originally to the four hundred, but it was rumored that he would soon have money enough to enable him to attain to that exclusive degree. His business connections, which were extensive, had enabled him to acquire a foothold in the charmed circle; this he had assiduously improved with a success which was quite as marked as that attendant upon his operations on

the exchange. Nor was his introduction to society a chance affair. He strove always to eliminate the element of chance from all his operations, by the way. No, he had schemed and planned for the social entrée as cunningly and as pertinaciously as he had ever engineered a deal in Hanover Square. It came through Mr. Bertram Van Benthuisen Livingstone.

Bertram and Constance were orphans, the man being his sister's junior by two years. No commiseration need be wasted upon the pair on account of their orphaned state. Old John Van Benthuisen Livingstone had lived long enough to increase the ample competence he had inherited from his Dutch forebears to one of those vast fortunes of latter-day Americanism, which are so common as to become rather boring when they are exploited in the press. Beginning in a rather small way, old John Livingstone had become the greatest dealer in coffee in the United States—a *bona-fide* dealer, not a speculator, that is. On his demise some ten years before, the fortune had been divided equally between his two surviving children, his wife having predeceased him by a number of years.

Bertram, or "Bertie," as he was generally called, had taken hold of the affairs of the great coffee business with vigor and capacity, and had eventually formed a close alliance with the great English firm of Parbuckle & Company so that they practically controlled the coffee market of the world. It was a trust *à deux*. The two portions of the Livingstone fortune had not been separated, but had grown together to a fabulous amount. Recently, however, Miss Livingstone had withdrawn from the firm, and had turned the greater portion of her moiety into negotiable securities—for what purpose she scarcely knew—bonds and stocks, which paid a fair dividend and which provided her with an income more than sufficient to meet any possible requirements.

Perhaps she had taken this step because her brother, not content with his

legitimate profits, great though they were, had recently begun to dabble in stocks and bonds in spite of her advice—not for investment, but for purposes of speculation. He was a lion in the coffee business but a lamb “in the street,” and not even the enormous fortune which he had received and accumulated could long stand the tremendous strains upon it. His sister had positively refused to countenance or join in any of his operations.

Mr. Cutter was not a party to any of Bertie's speculations, either. He was a broker in coffee, and that was a thing that Bertie had not speculated in heretofore. Although Mr. Cutter was thoroughly aware of Livingstone's course and could foresee its end, as any wise man could, for that matter, there was nothing he could do to stop it. A warning from him would have been presumptuous. Besides, Mr. Cutter did not wish it stopped. He was making money in the legitimate methods of his profession as fast as Bertie was losing it in the illegitimacy of his. And Mr. Cutter wanted a great deal of money. He wanted enough, if necessary, to buy Miss Livingstone. And Miss Livingstone rather liked him. The odd and unusual always appealed to her. Mr. Cutter was a year or two older than she, but he was so strong, so keen, so cool, so powerful, so unlike most of those she met, that she felt attracted to him.

It took nerve even to be a broker on 'Change. To spend the greater part of one's life in the Wall-street district; to be brought into direct competition with the master minds in finance and trade of the world in playing the great game of speculation, gambling on such a scale as is exhibited nowhere else on the globe, requires a congeries of varied talents as rare as they are necessary; and to be successful in the struggle implies the possession of qualities of the very highest order.

Mr. Cutter had all these requisites for success except mere physical bravery. Bravery being, as has been said, a quality of the blood, and courage an attribute of the mind, he was naturally

deficient in the former, although he abounded in the latter. He could, and did, engineer and carry out deals on the Stock Exchange which involved tremendous mental exertions and required the highest mental, or moral, courage. When he was vaccinated a few years before in a smallpox scare, which had scared him more than any one else, perhaps, he had fainted at the touch of the point or the sight of the blood on his arm. He concealed this weakness from the world, raged and fought against it in his heart, but could neither overcome nor deny it to himself. He could have beggared and broken the hearts of thousands by a deal without a qualm, but the cutting of a finger made him sick at the soul. Physical pain or physical terror mastered him at once.

However, this painful and distressing weakness did not prevent him from being a highly successful operator. Men do not settle differences with pistols and swords any more on 'Change or elsewhere, especially in the Wall-street district, but with cheques. Mr. Cutter could face any number of cheques, either as receiver or utterer thereof, without blenching.

It is quite possible that Mr. Cutter—his physical weakness being yet concealed—because of the very qualities that differentiated him from the men who usually surrounded Miss Livingstone, might have been successful ultimately, had it not been for the advent of Elijah D. Tillottson.

It was half-after eleven in the morning of one of those delightful days with which New York is sometimes blessed in the beginning of the last week in October. For that great city, then, if ever, come perfect days. Perhaps the fact distinguishes the country from the town. Spring is the season for green fields and leafy trees. Autumn is the period for brick walls and asphalt pavements. The Van Benthuyssen Livingstones, Constance and Bertie, still lived together, both being unmarried, and had just opened their town house on upper Fifth avenue, overlooking the Park, a little earlier than usual. Mr.

Tillottson, with that astonishing unconventionality which characterized all of his actions, was making a surprisingly early call upon the hostess.

Miss Livingstone had gone with him to the theatre, a box party engineered by Mr. Tillottson the night before, and as the performance had been succeeded by a supper, also engineered by Mr. Tillottson, Miss Livingstone had not retired until very early in the morning. Mr. Tillottson, on leaving her that night, had asked permission to call upon her the next day, which permission she had willingly granted. But she had not dreamed that he would present himself at such an unprecedented hour. On account of this mistake of his, he had been kept waiting for three-quarters of an hour while Miss Livingstone dressed herself and partook of a hasty cup of coffee in quicker time than she had exhibited for years. Another woman might have been offended at being forced to cut short her sleep and breakfast in this hurried manner. But what was the use of being offended at Mr. Tillottson? Miss Livingstone's curiosity was somewhat piqued, as her interest had been excited, by her caller. Mr. Tillottson had informed her, in his blunt way, that he had something important he wanted to tell her, and he wanted to tell her quick.

He was ushered into the library instead of the great drawing-room overlooking the Park. The library did not overlook anything but an area, but as its huge back window was filled with a magnificent conception in exquisite color, which admitted the light but through which nobody could see, it did not make much difference what was beyond.

Mr. Tillottson had never been in so magnificent a room in his life. Cases filled with rare books in beautiful bindings, éditions de luxe, priceless old copies, first impressions, which he could not appreciate but which he felt instinctively were of great value, lined the larger portion of the walls. Wherever there was an opening, pictures in keeping with the wealth and good taste

of the Livingstones diversified the space. The furniture, upholstered in red leather, was rich and massive. His feet sank into rugs which, to his critical eye, seemed scarcely in keeping with the richness of the room. Many of them were old, faded, and oriental and bizarre in color. He did not know that some people would have hung such rugs on the walls as priceless treasures.

The room would have daunted many people not accustomed to such things, but it took a great deal to daunt Elijah D. Tillottson. He had traveled and seen much, and, as he himself said, he wasn't often phased by anything he ran up against. For the rest, Mr. Tillottson was a small man. He only overtopped Miss Livingstone by about two inches. When she rolled her hair high, as she sometimes did, they were just of a size. He overtopped her fifteen years in age, too. His hair and mustache were white. So was the little imperial which he persisted in wearing. His complexion, however, was fair, not to say ruddy, and his eyes were as blue and bright as steel. There wasn't a wrinkle about him, in spite of his white hairs and fifty years. He was good to look at, a handsome man, in fact, and he could shoot with a "gun," or "Winchester," as unerringly as the archer who turned Philip of Macedon into a Cyclop could with his bow and arrow.

Like Miss Livingstone, Tillottson had pretty well exhausted what the world had to offer him. A young civil engineer, after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology nearly thirty years before, he had gone first to the West and thence through Mexico and so on down to the tropics, *i. e.*, Brazil, to seek his fortune. As a railroad surveyor, contractor, builder and general promoter, he had accumulated perhaps five millions of dollars, and with that in negotiable securities and an option on some mining property in Mexico, which might possibly become of value, he had come to New York, "back to civilization," he phrased it, to see a little of life before

he died. There he met Miss Livingstone.

A chance meeting at the Waldorf one evening, with a gentleman temporarily sojourning there while his Madison-avenue home was being renovated, had introduced him into society, and society had eagerly taken him up. A dinner at the Jones-Todds' had brought him in conjunction with Miss Livingstone, and she had added a new interest to his life. Like that lady, Tillottson had loved many times and often. He had had *affaires de cœur* all over the world, but that was in his younger days, and of late he had put such things by. He found that he should have to begin again.

He had never before seen a woman like Constance Livingstone. His heart, which he had thought immune to feminine influence, had gone straight out to her. With a directness which, after all, amounted to the highest finesse, he had devoted himself to her. She might have suspected in the case of another what was going on in the man's heart, but his very unconventionality disarmed her suspicion. She rode with him in the Park, she went with him to the theatre—that is, in the parties which, through her assistance, he was enabled to form. She had even entertained him at dinner, and now, after one week's acquaintance, she was intensely curious as to what he might have to say.

Tillottson had a moral courage as great as Cutter's, and a physical courage to match, as well. If he had boasted—which he never did—he would have said that he had never yet been in a situation in which he had shown the slightest evidence of fear; but as he sat there in that magnificent room awaiting the entrance of Miss Livingstone, his heart thumped like a schoolboy's. He extended his hand at last and observed, in shamed surprise, that it was actually trembling.

"By Jacks!" he muttered, "this'll never do! A babe could get the drop on me now. I never felt like this before. I've sure got it hard this time. I wonder what she'll do? The idea of

me—" He had never lacked audacity in his life, but now it was different. "Well," so his thoughts ran on, "I've got to do it. I've just got to tell that woman I want her for my wife, or——"

II

THE AMAZING PROPOSITION OF MR. TILLOTTSON

"Good morning, Mr. Tillottson."

The voice of the woman he loved broke in upon his reveries as she entered the library.

Tillottson had seen his divinity in a riding-habit well calculated to display her perfect figure; he had admired her in full dress at dinner; in demi-toilette at the theatre; in walking dress on the street; in driving costume on the Avenue; but there was a new touch of feminine sweetness in the pretty morning gown, an exquisite simplicity of fresh whiteness which fairly bewildered him. And it seemed, to his distracted mind, that with every frock she wore she exhibited a different phase of character to him. This time it was a sweetness and innocence that might have befitted an ingénue of eighteen; nor was there any assumption about it, either. It was simply my lady's mood.

"Good morning, Miss Livingstone. I've seen you in a lot of clothes this week—I didn't know one woman could wear so many different get-ups—but I believe I like you better in this white thing than any of the rest. You look as fresh as a prairie wild rose on a dewy morning, only that is pink and you are white."

"Thank you," laughed Miss Livingstone. "You are as poetic as you are frank, and both poetry and frankness are novelties in New York. Won't you be seated?"

"Thank you. If you'll sit down I'll stand up. I feel better standing up. I can face things calmer. I've got—I told you I had something to say to you."

"I remember. What is it?" replied the lady, graciously, at the same time

disposing herself in a large chair by the side of the desk, which permitted her sheer and delicate garment to fall from her waist in ripples of white, and which was just high enough from the floor to enable her cunningly to disclose a charming foot, which took no disgrace from the shoe or stocking which clad it. Long practice in the past had made her perfect in the apparently artless manœuvre. Of late she had not been wont to do such things, but Mr. Tillottson's advent awoke a long-buried desire to please and impress.

"By Jacks!" exclaimed Tillottson, gazing fatuously upon it, and endeavoring to suppress a frantic desire to prostrate himself before it.

"You had something to say to me?" asked Miss Livingstone, smiling pleasantly, and quite conscious of Mr. Tillottson's emotions at the sight of her foot, which, indeed, she had placed there for the very purpose of awakening his admiration.

"Yes. You won't mind if I walk up and down while I talk, will you?"

"Not at all. Do exactly as you please."

"I can stand still enough when it comes to facing a man, but a woman unsettles me, and I get relief in motion."

"I am not nervous, Mr. Tillottson, and your restless pacing does not annoy me."

"I know you're not nervous. I've seen that you are as cool as they make them. I'm accustomed to sizing up a man, and I'm not without experience of women, either, and I've sized you up for all right, Miss Livingstone."

It was a direct compliment without any poetry in it, but it flattered the woman strangely. Here was a man who was accustomed to mingle with men. He had, as he told her, sized her up "for all right." It pleased her.

"Well, I might as well shoot straight at the mark, Miss Livingstone," broke in Mr. Tillottson's voice upon her reflections. "Miss Livingstone—" He stopped and looked keenly at her. "You are not in love with any man, are you?"

"Mr. Tillottson!" exclaimed the woman, straightening up. Then she laughed softly, and sank back into her chair once more. What was the use of being annoyed with this unusual man, of being conventional with him? He meant nothing disrespectful, that was quite evident. He had spoken to her frankly, as man to man. It was one of those little moments in life when conventionalities seem very small things, even to those who have been brought up on them. He should be answered in the same spirit in which he questioned.

"I do not know what right you have to ask me such a thing, Mr. Tillottson, nor what makes me answer, but I will tell you the truth. I am not."

"That's good! I thought not. You don't look as if you are in love with anybody. I sized you up all right, I told you."

"Have you been spending your time in 'sizing me up,' as you say?"

"I sure have. I ain't—I haven't been, I should say—doing anything but that since I first saw you."

"Really!" said the woman.

"You wanted to know," continued the man, impetuously, "why I asked. I'll tell you. I am in love with you myself. I want to marry you!"

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Miss Livingstone, under her breath, utterly surprised at this declaration, which, in that it was at least novel in its method, was not without a certain charm.

"Mr. Tillottson," she said aloud, at last, "I must say I am surprised."

"You ought not to be. You must have had people in love with you before, I take it. You ought to know the rules of the game by this time, Miss Livingstone."

"I do, and I have had people in love with me, of course, as you say," returned the woman, biting her lips to keep down a smile, "but the circumstances are so unusual, you know, in this case."

"Of course they are. It's foolish, perhaps, for me, from one point of view, to love you. Certainly it's

foolish, and hopeless, too. Yet down where I have been living we don't take a man for anything but his real value. You've got lots of money, ancient family, position, all that. You could have anybody, and why take me? say you. And why take me? say I. I'm not poor. I've got a pretty comfortable fortune—enough to give you plenty to eat and put good clothes on your back, like you're wearin' now, though you do seem to have a mighty sight of 'em—which I wouldn't begrudge you, far from it—and you could have a reasonable good time, too, with me, I'm sure. I'm not exactly a nobody, either, though I say it, as I should not. My family came to Massachusetts some considerable time ago, I believe. But I'll admit I'm not in it with you on that score, or any other, for a minute. There's only one thing I have got that over-matches what you've got."

"You over-praise—over-value me; yet I am curious to know what that last is, Mr. Tillottson."

"My love for you, Miss Livingstone. Now, I'm no chicken in affairs of the heart. I have loved lots of women, and have loved 'em hard. At least, I thought I did, at the time—I suppose you have loved some yourself?"

"I have," returned the woman, promptly, gazing at this extraordinary wooer.

"I thought so; but you don't love any one now, do you?"

"No one. Do you?"

"Do I love any one? I should say so. You! I'm no boy, and I know what I'm saying. I never felt like this before. I was always master of myself before, but now I tell you it gives me palpitation of the heart, brings out the perspiration on my forehead, just to look at you. If you were to draw on me now, Miss Livingstone——"

"Draw on you?"

"Yes—a gun, you know—I couldn't do a thing. I'm just helpless. I know it's the real thing this trip. If I can't have you for my wife, well, the game's up for me—with women, that

is. As I said before, I'm not a good match for you in anything but one thing. You're beautiful enough, and rich enough, and fine enough, for a prince, and——"

"I have had a prince——"

"And turned him down? Good! What you want's an American that will understand you, love you, worship you, adore you, like I do. By Jacks! Miss Livingstone, maybe it seems a joke to you. You laughed at first. I don't blame you. But whether you take me or not, I'll belong to you for the rest of my life. I don't know why you should take me, either. I didn't come here with any particular hopes that you would. I am a plain, blunt fellow, and I must be a lot older than you——"

"How old are you, Mr. Tillottson?"

"Fifty."

"How old do you think I am?"

Society would have instantly embraced such an opportunity by saying twenty-two. Mr. Tillottson wasn't built that way, however.

"Well," he said, after a momentary reflection, "I should think you were about thirty-three."

"Gracious!" exclaimed the woman, sitting upright once more in great amazement.

"I don't judge by your looks, Miss Livingstone," continued the man, bravely and honestly; "you look as sweet and young and fresh as a girl, especially in that white thing you have on this morning, but by your mind, your thoughts, what you do, what you say. They seem older. How old are you, anyway?"

"Thirty-five," answered Miss Livingstone, faintly.

"Good! That's just a proper age for me. I've always preferred 'em at thirty-five. As for me, though I am fifty, I can whip my weight in wild-cats any time."

"Is that a proper qualification for a husband?"

"Is it? I don't know." He laughed heartily in appreciation of her quick thrust. "But my hand is as steady and my eye as keen as it has ever been

since I was born, except when I met you, and then everything went to pieces. Now, I know you don't love me. At least, you can't, yet. Maybe you never can. But you don't love anybody else, you say. There's one thing about you I like, and that is you know how to tell the truth better than any woman I ever saw. You're like a man in that."

"Thank you."

"Oh, don't thank me. You're like a man in lots of things."

"So you think me a nice, manly woman, do you?" she laughed, yet with a tinge of anxiety in her merriment.

"No, no, God forbid! Haven't I just told you I love the ground you walk on? I don't like manly women—those who can rope steers, and pull guns, and all that. But you have real, manly virtues, Miss Livingstone, softened and modified by womanly touches. Your brother will soon be married. They tell me you don't go much in society. Now, here's a chance to get a man, not much of a one, I'll have to admit, but a real man, sure, that'll love you and give you everything you want; a man who will devote himself to you entirely."

"They all say that."

"Well, I mean it. I've got no mother or relatives to annoy you, and you are alone in the world. What do you say, Miss Livingstone? Will you take me?"

It was a perplexing moment. Wonderful are the ways of Cupid. He aims his dart with impartial directness at the hearts of old bachelors who have gone through numberless campaigns like Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson, and on occasion he sends the arrow into the tender bosoms of ladies of mature years who have fondly imagined that they have done with love forever.

If any one had asked Miss Livingstone yesterday what were the qualifications she required in a suitor, that fastidious and critical lady, if she treated the matter seriously, would have described the very antipodes of

Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson. Yet, singular as it may appear, she felt at that moment a strange and unusual flutter in her heart, a reminiscence of past experiences, which she had imagined would never return. She had not been so strangely affected by an appeal of this kind for years. She had felt herself equal to any hymeneal proposition whatsoever, however startling and sudden its character. How was it, then, under the bright blue eyes of Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson, in the face of a question of that character, she felt so strangely nonplussed?

"You seem to be hangin' fire a long time, Miss Livingstone," he said, at last, stopping his restless promenade across the room, "but take your time. Delays, I take it, are favorable to me. There's something gained on my side that you didn't say 'no' right off, ain't there?"

Miss Livingstone gave a sudden start. Why on earth hadn't she said "no" right off to this preposterous proposition? Her mind began to seek excuses for her hesitation. There was some truth in what he had said. Her brother was devoted to Gertrude Van Stuyler. When they were married in the near future she would be one too many in the house. She was tired of society. It had nothing to offer her. She had tried men of the conventional stamp and had found them unsatisfactory. There was something in the erect figure of the little man before her that was most attractive. She had lived long enough, using his own language, to "size up" her suitors herself. He was in love with her, there was no doubt of it. A true, genuine, overwhelming passion rang in his voice. Her heart throbbed faintly in response to his words, greatly to her surprise. Yet—

"I know there is one great disadvantage I possess," broke in Mr. Tillottson again. Certainly his good angel must have been whispering in his ear at that moment. "I ain't—I am not, I should say, what you call cultivated. I began well, but I have lived on the frontiers of life and civili-

zation, in the West and South America, so long among people my inferiors in every way that I've become rough, uncouth, perhaps. I am not what I might have been, but I ain't—I am not——"

He stamped his foot with a little movement of impatience over his persistent blundering.

"Say 'ain't,' if you like, Mr. Tillottson. I rather enjoy it. It is unusual and refreshing. I never hear it."

"I am not an entirely uneducated person," he went on, oblivious of her last remark. "You would never believe it, I suppose, so I brought this along to show you."

He lifted a little packet from the desk where he had thrown it when he had entered the room, and handed it to her.

"That's my diploma from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I was just nineteen when I graduated, and, if you'll forgive me, it was at the head of my class. I think I was the youngest man that ever got that sheepskin, and while you don't know what I've done in the world since then, and it ain't pleasant for me to have to tell you, yet, if you conclude to say 'yes,' I'll take you to see some of the finest bits of railroad engineering over the Andes and down in old Mexico, that's to be seen anywhere. I'm responsible for 'em. We'll go down in style, and in our own private car, too."

"I always travel in my own private car," interrupted Miss Livingstone, quietly.

"Do you? Well, I can keep it up. That's all."

"And do you think you could support an expensive wife like myself?"

"Could I? Just try me. Say, does that mean that you're thinkin' about saying 'yes'?"

"I think so," answered Miss Livingstone, softly. "I believe I am considering the possibility."

Her heart was running counter to her judgment. Not a novel contradiction in similar situations. Tillottson had apparently worked the impossible. She was actually willing to

consider him in the light of a suitor! The man stopped before her in a perfect maze. The silence was so intense that she finally lifted her eyes to his. What she saw there brought the blood to her face in a flame. She had not believed that there was so much love and affection left in humanity, such passionate adoration.

"My God!" exclaimed Tillottson, in a low, tense voice. "Miss Livingstone, you don't mean it? You really think about me in that way? I never dreamed—I only told you because it was the manly thing to do and you ought to know it. I never expected—I am beneath your feet."

What was the man about to do? He sank down on his knees at her feet—it was horribly old-fashioned and very ridiculous; forgotten romances of an earlier age flashed through her mind, yet—he lifted the hem of her garment and kissed it like a knight of old.

"I am going now. Don't say a word to me. I want to carry the memory of this away with me. I don't want to spoil it by anything else. Perhaps, when you think it over, you may not be able to—well, to accept me. I'll learn that later. I don't want to hear it now. Good-bye. I'm coming to see you to-morrow morning, and I'm going to see your brother this afternoon."

Miss Livingstone did not say anything. She didn't even rise as he rose. She leaned forward in the chair and gave her hand to him. He took it in both his own; she trembled to feel how strong and firm was his grasp. Then he lifted it to his face, his white mustache brushed against it, and he was gone.

Left to herself, Miss Livingstone buried her face in her hands. Then she laughed, and then she cried, and then she dreamed. Her eyes fell upon the parchment that had been left on the desk. A look of amusement that was touched with pathos, aye, with affection, swept across her face.

"The credentials of my latest lover," she murmured, gazing at it in puzzled abstraction.

III

MISS LIVINGSTONE HEARS THE VOICE
OF SOCIETY

To Miss Livingstone, dawdling over a meal which was breakfast in point of priority, luncheon in point of time, entered Miss Gretchen De Kaater, a little later in the day. Miss De Kaater was a lady who had reached that point in life which is spoken of as "a certain age;" that is to say, she was certainly old enough to make it more than probable she would remain Miss De Kaater until the end of the chapter.

She had been a devoted friend as well as a distant connection of Miss Livingstone's mother, and, as far as that imperious and self-willed young lady had allowed her, Miss De Kaater had endeavored to supply the departed mother's part. The friendship that existed between the two women was a warm and tender one, such as often arises between the young and the old, and which is one of the compensations of life for the latter.

Indeed, Miss De Kaater was the object of general admiration in the set which she honored with her presence. Tall, distinguished, white-haired, highly cultivated, high principled, irreproachably bred, she was as narrow as a knife blade. She held herself aloof even from the modern adjuncts of the four hundred, prided herself upon her inordinately stubborn old Dutch blood, and would have nothing to do with any one who could not boast of at least six generations of unadulterated American descent!

As she swept into the room it was evident that something was about to happen. Miss Livingstone usually welcomed her advent with joy, finding her opinions both pungent and pronounced, and her conversations therefore refreshing, although she sometimes took a malicious pleasure in controverting the elder woman's decided views. But, at this particular moment, in her painful state of indecision and uncertainty, she wished that her elderly mentor were anywhere but in her own

breakfast-room. There was a very imposing directness about Miss De Kaater. She plunged in *medias res* at once.

"Constance," she asked, severely, with the air and manner of a grand inquisitor, "what is this I hear about this—er—cow-boy?"

It had come! Society, in the presence of its most honored and exalted representative, was already taking her in hand. Miss Livingstone affected to be above its influence. She had ceased to concern herself actively in society, and had thought society would reciprocate her lack of attention. But lo, and behold, she had been mistaken. Society never lets go of any one or forgets any one who breaks its conventions, however little it may concern itself about individuals who do nothing out of the common.

"What cow-boy, Aunt Gretchen? I know no cow-boys," replied the young woman, nerving herself for the conflict.

"Why, that little—er—Western man that the Jones-Todds picked up at the Waldorf a week ago. Awfully common people, those Jones-Todds; nothing on earth to recommend them but money."

"Mrs. Jones-Todd," put in Constance, deftly, "was a Smithson, of Alabama. Mr. Jones-Todd is a graduate of Harvard. Mrs. Jones-Todd is a Vassar girl—"

"Oh, my dear Constance, as for mere learning, I grant you that anybody who has money can get an education. It makes them, perhaps, less objectionable, but, *au fond*, does not alter the case at all. However, I did not come here to discuss them. I saw Willie Vanderawe yesterday afternoon and, having heard something about the affair, I asked him plainly what he knew. He said that you had dined with him—with this—er—person, I mean—at the Jones-Todds', on Monday; that you had ridden with him in the Park on Tuesday—"

"There were others in the party."

"Yes, yes, I know. You would never think of riding with him alone.

That you had walked down the Avenue with him on Wednesday——”

“I was going down to my milliner’s to buy an Autumn hat, and just happened to meet him.”

“Of course. Such things always ‘just happen,’ I know,” continued the old lady, sagely. “That you had gone to the theatre with him and afterward to the—think of it!—the Waldorf for supper——”

“Another party.”

“Certainly, another party, my dear Constance. Pray do not imagine that I think for an instant that you could so forget the dictates of society as to go alone with any one, but the party for him was plainly you. Now, that’s five times in one week, and I must say——”

“You haven’t heard it all, Aunt Gretchen,” said Constance, recklessly. “Mr. Vanderawe—to whom I am much obliged for his scrutiny of my movements—has neglected to tell that Mr. Tillottson——”

“Is that his name?”

“It is. Elijah D.——”

“Elijah! What an utterly impossible name!”

“It’s in the Bible, I believe.”

“Yes, my dear, but not in society. Go on.”

“And Tillottson, I am told, is a good old New England name.”

“It may be. There are some very good old New England names borne by people who are ineffably common from our standpoint. But you were saying——”

“That Mr. Tillottson had called on me twice during the week besides.”

“Really, my dear child, you amaze me! What did he want?”

“The first time, I think, he principally regaled me with some of his Western and tropical experiences—and very interesting they were, too. The second time he asked me to be—his wife!”

The murder was out. Miss De Kaater took it badly. She sat bolt upright and speechless, her white curls quivering with appalled astonishment, which indignation strove to master.

“His — his — wife! Preposterous! Why, my dear Constance, what did you do?”

“I told him I should consider it, and I shall!”

If Miss Gretchen had been one of the fainting kind she never would have survived the second shock. All rigidity left her. She fell back, a limp, haggard, old figure, collapsing in the chair.

“Constance, Constance,” she murmured, faintly, “do I understand you aright?”

“I cannot say as to that, Aunt Gretchen, but——”

“You will—you are considering——?”

“Yes.”

“But, Constance, my dear Constance, you cannot accept——”

“Why not?”

“So in—inappropriate, my dear Constance. Think! We never heard of him. He is not of our set. He doesn’t even belong to the new-comers. Really, what has been said to me about him indicates that he is lacking in—er—refinement—in—education—in short, he is uncouth, ill-bred——”

“I’ll tell you what he is, Aunt Gretchen. He is a man, through and through, if I ever saw one. He loves me with a genuine passion—not for my money, or for my position, or for anything else, but——”

“Love! Of course he would love you. But——”

“So I am considering it.”

“But you will reject him, my dear Constance! How could you think of such a thing!”

“I think it is likely that I shall reject him, but I shall give his suit very careful consideration. The man appeals to me in many ways.”

“Oh, my dear girl, I pray, I implore, I beseech you—this is madness! You talk of love like a silly, sentimental school-girl. You forget that you are——”

“That I am thirty-five? I do not. I was reminded of it to-day.”

“Reminded of it? By whom?”

“Mr. Tillottson.”

"How ineffably com——"

"It was not. It was refreshing. I was glad to hear it. He says he loves me for myself alone."

"They all say that."

"Yes. But this man means it."

"Your fortune, my dear."

"He doesn't know anything about it. He has money enough to take care of me, he says. As for his lack of education"—she lifted the parchment with a royal gesture and spread it out before the amazed lady's eyes—"here is his diploma."

"Did he come wooing you with that?"

"He did. I assure you, Aunt Gretchen, it was a unique avowal in every respect. It quite took me off my guard."

"But, my dear Constance, now that you have had time to think it over quietly——"

"I am as undecided as ever. I do not know, but I think it might be the best thing for me to do."

"What does Bertie think about it?"

"I do not know what he thinks about it, nor am I greatly concerned. He and I have been growing somewhat apart of late. As you have reminded me, I am of full age and must decide this thing myself. Besides, Bertie is going to marry Gertrude Van Stuyler."

"I know."

"When they are married I shall have to seek other quarters."

"My home," interrupted the old lady, eagerly, "my dear Constance, is always at your service. I shall be only too glad, too happy, to welcome you there, my dear child."

"Thank you, dear aunt," said Miss Livingstone, with a shudder of horror at the thought of the gloomy magnificence of the De Kaater mansion on Washington Square, which almost made her resolve to accept Mr. Tillottson at once. "I really like the man," she continued. "I respect him. I admire him."

It was difficult to know whether she was trying to persuade Miss De Kaater or herself. At any rate, she proceeded boldly.

"As I told you, he is the manliest man I have ever met."

"Yes?" doubtfully, and in great distress. "You seem to have made extraordinary progress in learning his history in a very brief acquaintance."

"I have. I do not know all that he has done, but what I do know I admire, and these qualities I speak of are those that manifest themselves to me. So far from being annoyed, I am honored by his proposal. And I am carefully considering it."

"You don't love him?"

"Certainly not. But, then, I do not love any one. That is, I do not love any man. I doubt if I ever shall. He is fifty years old."

"Fifty years old? My dear——"

"Beg pardon, miss," interrupted the English butler, tapping at the door, and then opening it. "Miss Van Stuyler is in the drawing-room, and would like to see you."

"Ask her to come in here, Williams."

"Constance, will you allow me to speak of this—this person, to Gertrude? She is a friend of yours. She is of your own set. Perhaps she——"

"Certainly, tell her if you wish," answered Miss Livingstone, "although I do not care, in justice to Mr. Tillottson, to have it generally known, but Gertrude is one of the family."

"Gertrude Van Stuyler, have you—" burst out the old lady, impetuously, as that young woman entered the room, "have you heard of this horrible—er—insolence of a Mr. Tillottson?"

"Insolence? No, Miss De Kaater. Good morning, Connie, dear. What insolence do you refer to?"

"Why, he says he is in love with Constance here."

"I was sure of it," answered Miss Van Stuyler, with an irrepressible little laugh. "Really, he is the most amusing man I ever came across. Fancy, we went to the theatre the other night——"

"Were you of that party?" queried Miss De Kaater, lifting her lorgnette.

"Yes, Miss De Kaater. My aunt, Mrs. Carberry Hills, chaperoned us. I'll tell you all about it."

Now Miss Livingstone immediately realized that Gertrude Van Stuyler was about to hold Mr. Tillottson up to ridicule. A word or two would have put her in possession of the facts, and have checked her, but Miss Livingstone deliberately determined to subject herself to the test of hearing the man who loved her put in an absurd light. She thought her emotions under such circumstances might be useful in assisting her to arrive at the promised decision, so she kept discreetly silent, only proffering Miss Van Stuyler a cup of tea while she rattled on.

"Was he—er—dressed properly?" queried Miss De Kaater.

"Oh, quite unexceptionably. Some one recommended him to Brookpool; he's the best English tailor in the city, you know, and he saw to it that he was all right. He's always beautifully dressed when I've seen him. Come to think of it, he did have a black tie on with his evening suit. The man looks well, Miss De Kaater. Indeed, I think he is very handsome—distinguished—really—you know. Quite like a gentleman, in fact."

"Won't you have another cup of tea, Gertrude, dear, or more sugar?" broke in Constance, with spontaneous gratitude.

"No more, thank you, dear. It is what he says that's so funny. He sat right back of Constance and myself, in the proscenium box, at the Empire. He said he had been to the theatre in Chicago, but never in New York, and, when we asked him about that time, he explained that it was at the Auditorium some years ago on a grand-opera night.

"I didn't have a rig like this, either," he remarked, with perfect frankness. "I had no boiled shirt——"

"Boiled shirt?" gasped Miss De Kaater, startled and horrified, for the girl's mimicry of Tillottson's voice and manner was as good as her memory for his words.

"That's what he called it."

"Go on."

"He said he wore a 'calico shirt,'

and he was the only man in the house that did, and he felt as comfortable as could be, a lot more comfortable, in fact, than he was last night."

"But in Chicago," murmured Miss De Kaater, in plaintive disdain, "they do those things, I've heard."

"Yes, of course. Then, after supper, he told us he had been informed by his social mentor, whoever that person is——"

"I told him myself," interrupted Constance, forcing herself to speak calmly, in spite of the fact that she was growing very angry indeed. "He asked me the night before."

"Oh, it was you, was it? Well, he said he had been informed that it was the correct thing to take a theatre-party to supper somewhere after the performance, so we drove over to the Waldorf. We thought it would be safer than at Sherry's, you know. He had a table engaged all right, but when it came to the ordering— Why didn't you post him up on that, Constance?"

"He didn't ask me."

"Well, he asked me that night, and I suggested oysters, salad or lobster à la Newburgh, and—er—champagne. 'Nonsense!' he replied, promptly, 'it's about midnight. We haven't had anything to eat for six hours. Solid food is what we want. If you're as hungry as I am, you'll welcome something more substantial. Here, waiter, bring us six orders of beefsteak and fried potatoes. And champagne for the ladies. As for me, I'll take a little whiskey straight with mine.'"

"At the Waldorf?" murmured Miss De Kaater, faintly.

"The very place, and it was filled with people, too, although none of them knew us, of course. They were not of our set."

"What did you do?"

"We ate the beefsteak. Enormous lot of it, too, as you can imagine. Six huge orders, and a separate waiter to each plate—very imposing! We drank the champagne, while he had his whiskey straight. It was all very good, too. I never realized I was so hungry."

"Does he eat with—er—his knife?"

"Oh, no, he eats all right. He isn't so very bad personally, you know, but the whole affair was too funny to describe even, and so exciting! Everybody in the room was so interested in us."

"I should think so!" exclaimed Miss De Kaater, with ineffable contempt speaking in every line of her face and figure, while the girl threw back her head and laughed and laughed.

Miss Van Stuyler's recital had brought the angry color to Miss Livingstone's face, while it had driven the last vestige of color remaining from Miss De Kaater's withered cheek.

"That was last night," broke in Miss Livingstone, swiftly. "This morning he asked me to be his wife."

The effect of this announcement was quite as startling to Miss Van Stuyler as it had been to the elder woman. Her laughter ceased instantly. She sat bolt upright in her chair in astonishment. "What!" she cried, shrilly, "asked you to marry him! Incredible! You refused him at once, of course. The preposterous little fool! This is what comes of encouraging——"

"She is considering it," wailed Miss De Kaater.

"Constance Van Benthuyssen Livingstone, you don't mean it?"

"I do."

"After all these things?"

"After all these things, and they are all true, Aunt Gretchen. But there are other things about the man which are only fair to tell. You were in the riding-party on Tuesday. They thought to play a trick on him. Bertie and Mr. Willie Vanderawe and that young Smith-Pogis picked out the most vicious horse they could find in the stable. You saw how he mastered it, Gertrude."

"Yes, in a cow-boy saddle, and such a way to ride!"

"I like the way he sat his horse. When you think of it, this up-and-down motion on a trotting horse is very absurd; he said it was a fool's way to ride, and nobody who had to spend a day on a bronco's back would ever try it."

"Fancy!"

"Yes, I do fancy it. And how tractable that brute became under his hand! And when my own horse bolted it was he who caught up with me and stopped the mare, which was very unmanageable that day. It was he who did it, while the rest of the men stupidly looked on. You have read about the Trans-Andean Railroad? He engineered and built it. He's a great engineer. He can do anything that a man can do, and do it better than most people. In those little things upon which society lays so much emphasis—and justly, too, perhaps—he has much to learn; but there are many things we can all learn from him."

"Why, my dear Constance, should you think of marriage? You are not in love with him?"

"No, although I admire him. If you could have seen him to-day! A man always appears at a disadvantage when he is asking a woman to marry him. That's my experience, anyway. But this morning——"

"What! That little——!"

"Hush, Gertrude! Whatever he is, I respect him, and you must not speak of him in that way. I allowed you to run on, as you have, in order that the worst might be told to Aunt Gretchen."

"But why should you marry at all?"

"When you and Bertie are married I shall be *de trop*."

"No, never! You shall live with us as long as you wish."

"That is very kind of you, Gertrude, but I should not wish to live with you. It is not right that I should."

"But what will society—your friends——?"

"My friends will agree with me if I decide to accept him, and, as for society, I really care little about it."

"She cares nothing for society," said Miss De Kaater, in a hopeless tone, looking at no one while she spoke, as if she were appealing to the immortal gods alone.

"I assure you, my dear Gertrude, you do not really know the man at all. He struck me at first as oddly as he struck you, but as I know him better

my opinions change. Now, I am doing him the honor to consider his suit as I should that of any other honorable man."

"Constance, will you have your man ring for my carriage? This has been too much for me. I must go home," said Miss De Kaater, in feeble resignation.

"What! Aunt Gretchen going home just as I come in?" exclaimed Mr. Bertie Livingstone, breezily, as he entered the room. "I'm glad to find you here, and you, too, dear." He went over to the girl and kissed her tenderly.

"Now, Constance"—thrusting his hand in his bosom and assuming a most magisterial and authoritative air, for all that he was her junior—"what's all this rot I hear about you and that wild-Western, semi-tropic freak that the Jones-Todds unloaded on us?"

"Are you referring to Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson?"—this with a freezing dignity that should have warned him.

"Is that his name? Elijah! Well, the little puppy had the insolence to come down to my office this morning and tell me that, recognizing me as the only masculine member of the family, he thought it only honorable to inform me that he had asked you to be his wife. Ha! ha!"

"What did you do, Bertie, dear?" asked Miss De Kaater, anxiously.

"I expressed my mind rather freely and forcibly, I flatter myself. I told him, among other things, that Constance was very rich; that she was mistress in her own right of a vast fortune; that I knew he was a mere fortune-hunter; that he was a common, low-bred parvenu, probably after her for her money; that if he ever entered my office again, or this house, I should have him kicked out by the servants."

"What did he do then?" asked Gertrude.

"He fumbled in his back pocket, where he keeps his handkerchief, I suppose. Possibly he wanted to blow his nose to hide his embarrassment."

Mr. Bertie Livingstone did not realize how near instant death he had

been at that interesting moment, for Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson had not been reaching for his handkerchief, and he was not thinking of blowing his nose, either.

"Then he bowed in quite a magnificent way. He said, 'You are her brother, sir,' and walked out of the place as stately as you please. Did he really presume to speak to you, Constance?"

"He did."

"What did you say?"

"I said I would consider his suit."

"Great God! Excuse me, ladies, but——"

"And I have considered it."

"You will——?"

"I shall accept him to-morrow."

She arose as she spoke, and swept out of the room, leaving the three a prey to the most petrifying consternation.

At eleven the next morning, Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson called again on Miss Livingstone, and this time she was up and waiting for him. She had been awake the greater part of the night and up since the early morning. She had fought a long battle with her relations and herself, and her mind was made up. Mr. Tillottson came into the library with his hand on his hip pocket again. He heaved a sigh of relief when he got there, too.

"I didn't know but that I'd have to shoot some one, Miss Livingstone," he remarked, coolly, "after what your brother said yesterday about having me kicked out. I was determined to see you, and I'd cheerfully have killed half-a-dozen flunkies if they had tried to stop me."

"Mr. Tillottson, I wish to apologize to you for my brother's outrageous behavior."

"Did he tell you to do it?"

"No. I am doing it on my own account."

"Well, don't you get yourself mixed up in this affair. If there is an apology to come, let it come from him. That's all right. I'll settle with him some day. Now, Miss Livingstone, let's

put aside this disagreeable subject," he went on, with unconscious frankness. "I told you I would come this morning for an answer. I'm not coming—that is, I don't want an answer, yet."

"What, sir?" cried the woman, amazed. "You haven't repented? You don't wish——?"

She was startled beyond her self-control by his remarks.

"I want you more profoundly than ever. I love you more than I did yesterday. It's had twenty-four hours to grow in, you see. I told you I was possessed of a fortune—enough to keep you in comfort if you'd be my wife—but I have my own pride, Miss Livingstone. I won't have it cast up to me that I am a fortune-hunter. Until I can match your fortune with my own, I'll not ask you again to be my wife—how much are you worth, anyway?"

"I hardly know. About ten million dollars, I think."

She was so startled that she answered his questions mechanically, as if the conversation were the most natural one in the world.

"Is it invested in your brother's business?"

"No. It was, but I have taken it out."

"That's all I wanted to know. The day I can bring you ten million dollars in my hand I shall ask you again to be my wife. Until that time I shall not bother you again in any way."

"That is a very large sum, Mr. Tillottson. I'm afraid you will never—it will take a long time to—" said the woman, faintly, blushing furiously as she did so.

"Yes, it is. But I'll make it, and quick, too, if you'll only wait. I have some money as a nest egg, and I've got a plan. Now, I won't see you, or speak to you, or trouble you again in any way for two months at least. I think that will give me plenty of time for everything. That's why I shall not ask you for an answer to that question now."

The little man had grown strangely

in dignity and force during the night, thought the woman, as she listened intently to him.

"I've got the memory of yesterday to blot out all the other unpleasantness, Miss Livingstone," he continued, "and I believe that you will wait for me two months—that is, say, until the first of January. It will give you a little more time for consideration, and me a few days more in which to get that ten millions. I can be brushing up my education, meanwhile, too. I can be learning something about the ways of your people, so that I can be fitter to ask you that question."

"I shall wait, Mr. Tillottson."

"Would it be stretching the bargain if I asked you to wish me good luck? It need not commit you to anything, you know."

"I wish you good luck with all my heart," said the woman, rising and giving him both her hands. "You didn't ask me the question you came to ask, so I will not answer it, but—I had decided——"

She flashed a glance at him that sent the blood leaping in his veins.

"God bless you, Miss Livingstone!" he cried, exultantly, grasping her hands. "I'll ask you that question on the first day of the new year. Good-bye."

IV

MISS LIVINGSTONE RECEIVES TWO OTHER PROPOSALS

Miss LIVINGSTONE had gone through various phases of indecision since her ears had first been greeted by the amazing proposition of Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson. If she had been handled more judiciously by her friends it is quite possible that the transient emotions which had been evoked by his unique proposal and unusual personality would have been dissipated in the sober light of reflection, and on his next visit her remarkable wooer would have been gently, but firmly, dismissed. But the ex-

ceedingly injudicious and somewhat foolish attack of Miss De Kaater, and the flippant, shallow mockery of Miss Van Stuyler, had given her pause. When to these her brother's brutal treatment had been added she resolved to accept him at once. A night's reflection, however, had somewhat impaired the soundness of that conclusion, and before she saw her lover in the morning she had once more fallen into a state of uncertainty.

She had made this much progress, however, that whatever she had determined upon she had not determined to reject him. She was temporizing in her own mind. Tillottson's own sudden decision not to ask for an answer to his proposal had added a new phase to the situation. To her great surprise he had not pressed his request, and when he did not her thoughts turned to the deciding point again—and she had been his for the asking!

Without at all intending to be clever, Tillottson had been brilliantly tactful in his manipulation of the situation, for when she found she was not asked to decide she immediately did so. She was not too old, or too experienced, to be essentially a woman, and Tillottson's refusal to press his suit, and the reasons he gave, had been overwhelmingly in his favor.

Really, she found the man delightful. There was a freshness and innocence about him in spite of his worldly wisdom—an innocence of unconventionality, that is—thought the woman, who was satiated with and bored by overmuch conventionality, that was most charming. In her large experience, an ordinary wooer could be counted upon to do certain things in a certain way as unerringly as a proposition in mathematics might be demonstrated. Tillottson was plainly not of that sort.

The magnificent assurance with which he had announced his intention of making ten million dollars in two months was startling in itself. She did not know how much he had to begin with—probably a hundred thou-

sand dollars, she guessed, maybe a trifle more. But he seemed entirely confident of success, perhaps because he did not realize how stupendous was the proposition he had set before himself. With a wider knowledge than his of modern business conditions in New York she was thoroughly skeptical, and yet she caught herself hoping that it might be so. Not that there was any need for him to do so, since she had enough for—her thoughts actually surprised her. Could it be that she was in love?

No, certainly not, she was not in love with Tillottson, as she had experienced love in the past—so at least she strove to persuade herself—but she certainly liked him very much, she admitted, and that liking was a growing one, and might be sufficiently strong in the end to enable her to marry him. Where could she find a gentler, a truer man, than he, or a man more devotedly attached to her, for herself alone?

There was something attractive about the idea of marrying him, too. She had always been a daring young lady, and she thought she would enjoy the social uplifting of hands, the social wagging of tongues, that would ensue if the opinion Miss De Kaater and Gertrude Van Stuyler held was any criterion, when she announced her decision to marry him. How shocked every one would be!

So, on mature reflection, although she vowed she did not love him, and could never be brought to admit that she did, or could, privately she was beginning to do so. She compromised with her conscience at last by mentally agreeing to leave the determination of the affair to the enterprise upon which Tillottson was engaged. As he succeeded or failed she would decide. Meanwhile, she would endeavor to think no more about him, dismiss him from her mind during the intervening two months.

That resolution was more easily made than kept, and when the next morning brought her a magnificent box of American beauty roses, with-

out card or other indication of the sender, she instantly divined that they were from him. He had made that much progress in her affection, for she referred to him mentally and exclusively by that personal pronoun—a good omen for Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson.

That afternoon—the next after Tillottson's refusal to ask for her answer—she had two callers. The first was Mr. Cunninghame Cutter. Mr. Cunninghame Cutter had been the recipient of a confidence which had stirred him profoundly. Although he was not ready—at least the time had not arrived in his elaborate plan of campaign to make his proposal to Miss Livingstone—yet what he had learned rendered it imperative that he should no longer delay. In plain words, he came to ask her to be his wife.

Mr. Cunninghame Cutter was too much of a business man to be romantic, and was too calm and self-possessed not to cover up most of his emotion, yet genuine feeling thrilled in his voice as he asked the fateful question. Under other circumstances, although she admired him greatly, Miss Livingstone would have kindly but definitely rejected him. But now she was in a curious state of uncertainty and indecision.

Mr. Cutter was a handsome, distinguished-looking man, well bred, keen, forceful, able. Qualities that she greatly admired shone in his face. Qualities she did not admire were carefully concealed. Who can account for the vagaries of the feminine heart, especially when it has survived in isolation, in spite of persistent attacks, for thirty-five long, if glorious and triumphant, Summers? Miss Livingstone temporized again—why, she scarcely knew; perhaps to prove to herself that her heart did not bind her to Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson!

She told Mr. Cutter that she did not love him. She further stated that she had under consideration—it was singular how she accommodated her language to his businesslike methods—

another proposition of similar character to his own, a decision on which she had promised to defer until the first of January next. Therefore, even if she were so inclined, she could not reply definitely to Mr. Cutter's suit until that time, unless he were willing to take a present negative decision.

Mr. Cutter ventured to inquire as to the state of her feelings with regard to this other proposition, some details of which he had learned elsewhere, although that was a fact he did not allude to, and was frankly told that she was undecided. She was also frank enough to tell him that it was highly improbable that he would receive a favorable decision in any case.

Choosing not to construe this as a flat refusal, Mr. Cutter promised himself, and finally advised her, that he would also come for her answer on the first of the year himself. Miss Livingstone immediately promised that he should have it then. Mr. Cutter's choice of flowers was violets. To the American beauties, therefore, which came daily, was added a gorgeous heap of Parma violets every morning.

Later in the same afternoon the Honorable Reginald Kentigern Killebrew, etc., also made his appearance. His presence was the result of a deep conspiracy between Miss De Kaater, Miss Van Stuyler and Bertie Livingstone. A fortuitous cablegram, received that morning from England, gave him another long-desired opportunity to present himself anew at the shrine of his divinity. Once again, his ardor and passion overcoming his usual stammering timidity, he began in those broken accents, with those disjointed phrases with which very youthful English lovers lamely express themselves until they are old enough to acquire the habit of talking freely and flippantly, after the manner of the United States! The cablegram was from his father. It told of an official notification from the Prime Minister of his Gracious Majesty the King, that for great political services rendered—said services having been commuted into hard cash, by the way—his well-

beloved Baron Revelstone was to be gazetted an earl at the first convenient opportunity, and that the Honorable Reginald Kentigern, etc., would thereby become a lord.

"Now, you're a ripping girl, ye know, and I like you awfully well, really I do," he drawled. "Of course, you are above this sort of thing, but most Americans seem to think it is—rather a jolly thing to be a lord, or a lady, I mean—and—er—that sort of thing, don't you know, and I—I—want you awfully—'pon honor, I do. I'll settle on you everything the old man gives me, and he's awfully liberal, too; and he'll cut up fine some day, I'm sure, 'pon my word, although I hope he'll not be in a hurry about that."

"I am old enough to be your mother," said Miss Livingstone, calmly.

"Oh, come now, really, you know," staring at her through his monocle with a deprecating grin.

"And in America we do not marry men for what their fathers are or do."

"Some girls do, you know."

"Of course, but I do not."

"Would you marry me if I were to do—er—something—er—ripping, don't you know?"

"I do not know. I think not."

"But would my chances be better if I did?"

"They could not be worse, so they might be better in one sense."

"What is there for me to do?"

"Well, that is for you to find out. There are no dragons to slay that I can suggest, and——"

"Oh, now, really you are joking——"

"I will give you one hint, however. There was a man the other day who proposed to make a great deal of money, and, when he made it, he was going to ask me to be his wife."

"Beg pardon, Miss Livingstone, but did you agree——?"

"I gave him two months to make the money—more because he insisted on it himself than on account of the money, you understand—and then I promised to give him a decision. I did not bind myself to anything."

"By Jove, I'll do it myself! How much is he going to make?"

"I think he said ten million dollars."

"What! That's two million pounds!"

The man was so startled that for the first time she had known him his monocle fell from his eye. It was an interesting moment, indeed.

"It is," she answered, smiling at his discomfiture.

"If I could make that in two months would you marry me?"

Miss Livingstone laughed. The absurdity of the question was too great, even for her courtesy.

"I should certainly be more inclined to consider you than I am now, not on account of the money, of course, but because it would demonstrate your ability, you know; but I should not bind myself to anything. I think it is very unlikely."

"I never made any money before, but people do make lots of money in the Stock Exchange, they say, don't you know. It's real easy, I'm told, if you know the game. I'm going to try it."

"My advice to you, Mr. Smith-Pogis, is one word—don't!"

"But, Miss Livingstone, it's the only way to impress you, and, by Jove, I'll do it!"

"You understand fully, of course, that I'm not bound to anything?"

"Oh, quite!"

"Well, on those conditions, come to me two months from to-day, and I will give you your answer."

The Honorable Reginald, etc., elected carnations for his flower, and a daily boxful took its place beside the roses and violets. If Miss Livingstone had many more suitors to drop down upon her, she would have to enlarge her house or turn it into a conservatory.

There was something of the sports-woman about Miss Livingstone, and she found much excitement in the situation. She did not regard herself as being auctioned off among her suitors. She did not consider that she was being bought, for she had been explicit in her declaration that she reserved for her-

self full liberty of choice at the time she had appointed for the decision, whatever her three lovers succeeded or failed in doing. She did not realize that she had already made up her mind, that she was no longer a free agent, but such were the facts.

No sum had been set for Mr. Cutter to achieve. As for the Honorable Reginald, etc., he could be dismissed from the running. There was nothing he could do by which he could legitimately earn ten cents, and, as for Tillottson, he had taken the matter in his own hands, and set his own pace. Since Tillottson kept himself from her society for the intervening two months, she considered it only fair that the others should do likewise, so notes in her elegant handwriting were sped to her last two suitors, requesting that they should not trouble her with wooing, or other matters, until the first of January.

It was easy to keep track of Smith-Pogis through the newspapers; they were filled with his doings, and sometimes she met him in society. Society had no longer any charms for him except as it permitted him to see her. He spent the evening at functions where she was present, plastered against the wall, eying her through his monocle; and when she left he left. A most uninteresting specimen he was voted by matchmaking mamas and marriageable daughters with inclinations toward the British aristocracy. He neither spoke to her, nor wrote to her, nor troubled her in any way, save by looking at her whenever and wherever he could. There was good stuff in the Honorable Reginald, she recognized, and it told in the end.

Mr. Cutter also had few opportunities of gazing from afar at his divinity, for he was intensely busy, and found little time to devote to social functions. Nor was his entrée comparable to that of his English rival, yet Miss Livingstone heard of him also at infrequent intervals; as often as she wished, that is. But her remaining suitor, Mr. Elijah D. Tillottson, seemed to have dropped completely

out of her existence. He gave up his apartments at the Waldorf, and nobody knew where he had gone. His mail was directed to the banking house of Merrill & Frost, corner of Nassau and Liberty streets. The daily consignment of flowers—and how reluctant she became to throw away even the withered ones!—proved that he was still on the earth and still thought of her.

As for her, she thought of him more and more. If she had been a girl in her teens she could not have done worse, she told herself, with a valiant assumption of self-contempt. The other two men she dismissed from her mind. So she passed through two months of the hardest waiting that ever fell to the lot of any woman. It was relieved toward the latter part by a series of happenings as unexpected and startling as they were dramatic and interesting.

V

THE GREAT DEAL IS ON

To increase a capital of \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 in the space of two months requires a singular combination of ability and opportunity. Usually, it can be done only on the Stock Exchange. Fortunately for Tillottson, when he left Brazil he had converted his extensive property into gilt-edge securities, easily negotiable, upon which he could realize at once. There was no difficulty as to his command of his capital. When he had confidently announced to the woman he loved that he intended to present himself to her in two months for an answer to his question with ten million dollars to match her own, it had been no wild, unfounded boast. The boaster in the lands where Tillottson had lived and made his fortune speedily comes to grief. He had a well-defined plan of action.

The enterprise he was about to inaugurate was not a new idea to him, for he had considered it carefully before he ever returned to the United

States, and had only decided not to undertake it because there was no real reason, after all, why he should want more money than he already had. He was, in a measure, prepared for it, therefore. It was not the offspring of a sudden impulse, the decision of an exigent moment.

In brief, he proposed to corner the coffee market in December. Under ordinary circumstances, such is the enormous production of coffee, and such is the magnitude of the visible supply in the United States and the world, that a corner in coffee is a practical impossibility; yet fortune had so favored the would-be speculator that if ever conditions were favorable to corner coffee they would be in that December.

Now, the bulk of the coffee—something like ninety per cent.—that is consumed in the United States, or in the world even, happens to come from Brazil. The greater portion of the remaining ten per cent. comes from Mexico and other South American countries. The amount of Java and Mocha, like that really included in the ordinary mixture sold under those high-sounding names, is a negligible quantity. There had been a crop failure in Brazil for two years in succession, and the present crop was the shortest that had been harvested for years. Prior to these natural shortages, economic disturbances and political upheavals from which the Brazilian Republic was still suffering had conduced to produce a third yearly deficiency in the coffee crop.

Coffee was scarce and was already selling for fifteen cents per pound on the Exchange. This was a very unusual price indeed. In addition to the fact that there was a short crop the Brazilian dealers were holding off shipments for higher prices. The visible supply had steadily decreased to a smaller amount than it had reached for fifty years. It is roughly estimated that every man, woman and child in the United States now consumes about twenty pounds of coffee in a year, and the ratio of consump-

tion is steadily growing. Yet there was no such thing as a coffee famine. There were still reserve stocks in the United States and stocks in Europe which could be drawn upon.

Whether it would be possible to control the coffee market was a question. Tillottson thought it would be. At any rate, he was entirely willing to stake his entire fortune on his ability to control it. Besides, in this instance, he had to do it. Like every soldier of fortune—and your modern American engineer, who goes all over the world mastering its physical difficulties, is the modern successor of the representatives of that ancient guild—Tillottson was a born speculator. But there was more in it than mere speculation for him. It wasn't simply the increment of his fortune for which he fought, but the hand of the woman he loved. He determined to succeed, and he was confident that he would, for a reason which was yet unknown to the world.

Tillottson's relations with the present authorities in Brazil were very close and personal. He had reason to believe, from what he had learned, that before the close of the year a final effort would be made to collect certain long-standing and rapidly increasing debts from Brazilian debtors due to English, German and Spanish creditors. His knowledge of inside affairs in Brazil enabled him to make a shrewd guess that the payment of these debts would be refused by the Government, and that England, Germany and Spain would endeavor to collect them by force. This would tend to render the shortage of coffee greater than it already was. There were many contingencies which seemed certain to arise under these circumstances, and Tillottson determined to take advantage of them.

There was another reason why he wanted to corner the coffee market, too, and that was because he thought in so doing he could squeeze the life out of Bertie Livingstone! Tillottson cherished a very bitter feeling toward that young man. He hadn't shot him,

as he would have any other man when he had been grossly insulted—he could not shoot “her” brother—but he did not hesitate to declare, in his mind, that he would get even with him if he could, and he thought that he could in this coffee deal, in which he felt certain that Bertie would soon be involved on the bear side, on account of his business connections.

The principal coffee brokers in the United States, Tillottson had learned from his correspondents in Brazil, were Cutter, Drewitt & Co. To them, therefore, he repaired the day he left Miss Livingstone. Mr. Cutter had heard of him, and when he was announced he had him ushered immediately into the private office. Mr. Cutter’s interest in him was not only professional but personal. As a possible rival he was glad to make his acquaintance and have a chance to size him up.

“My name is Tillottson,” began the engineer.

“I am glad to meet you, Mr. Tillottson. Sit down, sir.”

“Thank you. You will regard what I have to say as strictly confidential?”

“Certainly, sir. It is a rule of the business.”

“Quite so. I have heard of you as the largest coffee broker in the United States.”

“You honor me, my dear sir.”

“The fact honors you. I want to know if you are at liberty to undertake a deal with me?”

“What sort of a deal, Mr. Tillottson?”

“I intend to corner the coffee market of the United States.”

“That is a very extensive proposition, sir. So far as I am aware, no one has ever succeeded in doing that.”

“I shall. I have inside information which makes me believe I can do it. Now, I don’t know anything about the rules of the game. The general principles I know something about, though. I have got to play it, I understand, through somebody who has a license to deal. I’ve pitched on you. Do you want to take it?”

“I shall be happy to execute any commissions you may entrust to me,” replied the other, cautiously.

“Well, that is what I want you to do. I’ve heard that brokers sometimes mix up in this sort of thing on their own account.”

“True—quite true.”

“I don’t want you to get into this. It’s my deal, and I want to carry it all. If you mix in it it’s your own risk. I warn you to keep out of it.”

“I quite understand that, Mr. Tillottson. Now, what do you propose to do?”

“I want to buy all the coffee that is offered for December delivery.”

“The price of coffee is already high.”

“Yes.”

“And it will go higher.”

“Certain to.”

“The crop is short.”

“I know that.”

“But, on the other hand, there is a considerable visible supply that must be reckoned with both here and in England, and the deliveries from Brazil have been few of late, so that, in spite of the short crop, they must have an immense stock down there.”

“They have. They’re holding it for a higher price, I happen to know.”

“I presume so. As soon as we commence buying the price will rise, you understand.”

“Naturally.”

“And the Brazilian supply will be rushed into the ships and headed for New York.”

“I’m not so sure about that.”

“My dear sir, it is inevitable that it should.”

“Mr. Cutter, suppose I am in possession of information that leads me to believe the Brazilian planters and speculators won’t be able to ship their coffee when they want to? Seeing the price go up they’ll continue to hold for a still higher one—until too late. Shipments will be prevented.”

“What!” cried Cutter, in great surprise; then, recovering himself, he continued: “If such a thing were possible, that would greatly relieve the situation from our point of view. But, of course,

there would be the European stocks to be dealt with."

"I know that. A large proportion of them will probably come over here. But the visible supply ain't none too great." Mr. Cutter shuddered at the ungrammatical language. "Well, sir, we'll have to take care of it somehow or other."

"We may as well be frank with each other, Mr. Tillottson. May I ask what capital you have available at present to begin operations?"

For answer, Tillottson laid his bank-book down on the table in front of Cutter.

"There's five million to my credit in hard cash in Merrill & Frost's bank," he said. "They'll act as my bankers in the deal."

"That's a magnificent sum to begin with," said the broker, his opinion of Tillottson going up by leaps and bounds, "but we shall need more than that before we get through."

"I can get more."

"Excuse me; how much?"

"As much again. I've got a partner down in Brazil. He and I split even when we parted, six months ago, and if he hasn't lost his pile I guess it's at my service."

"Well, you'd better make sure of that."

"I have. I wired him last night to come up here with all his money. I told him I had a big deal on hand. I took the liberty of directing him to reply to your office."

Just then there was a knock on the door, and a telegram was handed in.

"It is for you, Mr. Tillottson," said Cutter, after glancing at the envelope.

"We'll see what he's going to do," said the latter, tearing it open. "Just as I thought. He'll be here on the first steamer, and bring his money with him."

"Are you sure he would care to embark in a deal of this kind?"

"Dead certain. I'd do the same for him. And when he knows I'm doing it for a woman——"

"For a woman?"

"Yes. I didn't mean to let that

out, but, now the mischief's done, you might as well know. I have proposed marriage to a young lady with a fortune of some ten millions."

"How did you know that, may I ask?"

"She told me so herself. I asked her to be my wife, but before she gave me her decision her brother accused me of being a fortune-hunter, and I said I was going to make a fortune to match her own before I came to see her again. I have two months to do it in, and I'm going to do it."

"I see," said Mr. Cutter, gravely, instantly divining from what he had heard of Mr. Tillottson's movements during the past week who the lady was. Very little that touched Miss Livingstone of late had escaped Mr. Cutter's keen scrutiny.

"So, when I tell Johnstone—he's my partner—about this deal, he'll be in it right away. Johnstone is the greatest poker player in the world. He's got nerve enough to stand in a game with every dollar he has on earth, without holding a pair in his hand, just for the fun of the game. And he'd do anything for an old partner like me. You don't know the kind of men they breed outside of Wall street, I take it—meaning no disrespect to you and your friends, of course."

"Well, that will increase your capital to about ten million dollars. I think we may be able to do with that, provided those Brazilian stocks don't turn up. If they do, you will fail."

"Yes, that's the risk; I'll have to take it."

"Very well, you know best about that."

"Isn't there some way of turning over our capital and make it do more work than ten millions?"

"Of course. For instance, as fast as any coffee is delivered to us we can do two things with it. We can sell judiciously at the higher prices; some of it we can turn into small dealers' hands; and for what we have to take and keep we can turn over the warehouse receipts to the bank and borrow money on them."

"I thought so. I've made some study about this thing. There's been a book written about it, 'The Work of Wall Street,' you know. I bought a copy last night, and read it through. When shall we begin the campaign?"

"The sooner the better. Of course, you do not wish to appear in the deal?"

"Don't breathe a word about it to anybody that I am backing you. I've engaged a room up on Broadway here, and had a telephone put in, under the name of X. P. Smith. You can communicate with me that way. I'm going to be dead to the world for two months. I want you to engineer this deal. I'll keep close watch on it, of course."

"Certainly, Mr. Tillottson, we shall keep in constant communication with you."

"Let me say this one thing," said Tillottson, impressively; "when I trust a man I trust him through and through. But if he plays me false, by God, I'll take it out of him, if it costs me my life!"

"You can depend upon me, sir," said Cutter, quietly, although that miserable physical fear which he could not control shot through him like a spasm. "I shall have as much interest in this thing as you. I'm equally anxious with you to clear a large sum of money by the first of the year."

"I warn you to keep out of this thing, except as a broker. I don't want any hampering conditions in my affairs."

"Trust me, Mr. Tillottson. I shall confine myself strictly to business in this connection. By the way, you didn't tell me what it was that was going to prevent shipments of Brazilian coffee."

"No," said Tillottson, "I didn't. That'll come out later in the game."

"All right. Would you like to see the beginning of the deal?"

"I would."

"You know, coffee is sold on 'Change in lots of two hundred and fifty bags, or multiples of two hundred and fifty only; each bag contains one hundred

and thirty pounds. There are nine grades, and the price is based on number seven grade, which is the standard. For instance, if you buy one hundred lots of number seven, that means that you buy twenty-five thousand bags, or three million two hundred and fifty pounds, grade number seven. The seller can deliver any grade of coffee in supplying that order, the difference in price of the various grades being adjusted on a scale determined by the Exchange."

"I understand. Go ahead."

Mr. Cutter lifted the telephone receiver from the hook, and placed his mouth to the transmitter.

"Give me 1172 Coffee Exchange," he said. "Is that you, Drewitt?"

"Yes."

"This is Cutter. About how many, Mr. Tillottson?" turning aside.

"Oh, about a thousand lots."

"Better make it one hundred. Keep it going by small increments."

"All right."

"Buy one hundred lots of December coffee. Repeat the order twice during the day, without exciting any suspicion."

"Very good."

Cutter hung the receiver back on its hook.

"The deal is on, Mr. Tillottson," he said, quietly.

"Good!" exclaimed Tillottson. "I'm glad of it."

"We'll try to make it a successful one," returned the other man, smiling.

That afternoon, as has been seen, Mr. Cutter called on Miss Livingstone.

VI

MR. BERTIE LIVINGSTONE APPEALS IN VAIN

MR. CUTTER faithfully executed the commissions of Mr. Tillottson. Not only was it proper, but it was to his own interest, as well, to play fair. Certainly this was true of the early stages of the deal. If it were determined later, in Mr. Cutter's judgment,

that Tillottson could not succeed in cornering coffee, his course might be different; and in that case he would have no hesitation whatever in throwing his principal over.

Mr. Cutter was a man of average morality. People who think of the average man imagine a character midway between the highest and the lowest specimens of humanity, and take no account of quantitative factors which should be considered in striking a mean; and the average is much lower than the popular estimation of it. Mr. Cutter's ethics were somewhat faulty. He was honest, because it was the best policy in his business, but if a better policy could be shown him in dishonesty, he would not have hesitated to put the knife—metaphorically speaking—into Mr. Tillottson or anybody else.

And in this instance Mr. Cutter was playing for far more than money. He, too, was playing for Miss Livingstone. Money and Miss Livingstone were his gods, and the order of precedence is seen in that arrangement. Although he loved the woman it did not occur to him that he was degrading her by imagining that she could be bought by money. She did not love him, he was forced to admit, yet he was confident that if he could get enough money he could, in the sporting language of the day, "get the decision," and obtain the prize. Affection would come later. Money would do it. Money was about the only power Mr. Cutter recognized, and its potentialities to him were illimitable.

But there was no haste. The coffee deal was progressing satisfactorily and quietly, and nothing could be gained by being precipitate. So he brought to bear in the service of his daring customer every resource of his unusual ability and experience. No such clever manipulation of coffee had ever been seen on 'Change. So cunningly did he cover his bull movements that it was not for six weeks that the Street awakened to the fact that some one was trying to corner December coffee.

Tillottson had been as a lamb on the Exchange when he first entered the deal, but he was shrewd and capable, and he soon mastered the intricacies of the affair, as it progressed, without difficulty. He was even able to suggest little manoeuvres, from time to time, which showed his practical insight into the operation, and marked him as possessing the makings of a brilliant operator.

Cutter was surprised at this. The one capacity he appreciated and valued was an ability to make money. His respect for his principal grew visibly greater. He began to consider him more carefully in the light of a possible rival for Miss Livingstone's affections. It was quite within the bounds of probability that if Tillottson succeeded in this deal he might, to use that sporting expression again, get the decision, and the prize himself. Cutter did not know that Tillottson was bound to get the decision anyway. What he had learned was sufficiently disquieting. He decided that he must be very circumspect in choosing his policy, and the time was fast approaching when he must determine what course he was to pursue; whether to continue loyal, to keep faith with Tillottson, or covertly to get on the other side, was the question.

The other side of the coffee deal was represented by Bertie Livingstone, naturally enough, and as Tillottson had hoped and anticipated. Bertie came out in the open, as was his habit, being a bold operator, and made a determined and persistent endeavor to keep prices down and break the corner. Of course, there were numerous other operators on both sides of the market, but the bulls were represented by Cutter, Drewitt & Co., and the bears by Bertie Livingstone. No one had the slightest idea, as yet, who was back of Cutter, Drewitt & Co., but the money to make good all their purchases seemed to come in plentifully. Cutter, Drewitt & Co. bought everything that was offered; they had to, of course. The price had

already begun to creep up point by point—a point being five one hundredths of a cent. It was buy, buy, buy, on the part of the bulls, and sell, sell, sell, on the part of the bears, until the transactions reached a magnitude never before recorded in the history of the Coffee Exchange.

As the visible supply of the United States, constantly augmented by the shipments from Brazil, passed into the control of Cutter, Drewitt & Co., of New York, the eyes of the coffee world began to turn toward the United States. The Brazilian merchants were still holding on to their stocks for a further rise which appeared certain, but there was evidence that they would not be able much longer to withstand the tremendous pressure on them to sell.

The Honorable Reginald, etc., had not yet entered the great coffee deal—at least, he had taken only a few “flyers,” dabbled in a small way, that is, simply to enable him to learn the ropes, “don’t you know.” But as the deal began to get in the air he hurriedly communicated with his hard-headed old father, who was fully advised of all the movements of the American Coffee Exchange, and the baron cabled his son a large credit, advising him to buy. Lord Revelstone was in possession of the inside information of which Tillottson had spoken regarding the political situation, and consequently favorably disposed to the side of the bulls.

Mr. Johnstone had hastened from Brazil, with a spontaneous generosity that would have been refreshing to the Street had it been known, and had gleefully embarked his pile in the deal with his whilom partner. Mr. Johnstone was an old bachelor who cared nothing for money, save for the fun it would procure him, and nothing he had ever attempted had proved more amusing than this gigantic speculation in coffee. He was of Southern birth, and as gallant as he was game. That Tillottson, “young Tillottson,” he called him, was fighting for his sweetheart added zest to the

great play. He entered into it with the enthusiasm of a boy.

“We may lose, old man,” he said, “but we’ll have a damned fine lot of fun before we git through. And we’ll keep these Wall-street sharps on the jump, too.”

The bears were confident, however, and Bertie Livingstone, who had embarked the entire remains of his fortune in the game, gave up everything to attend strictly to the business in hand. He fought with a skill and courage which would have delighted his old father, and which awakened the admiration of the Street. Indeed, such a duel as was waged between Cutter, Drewitt & Co. and Livingstone was rare on ‘Change. It was like two of the most skilled fencers crossing blades. Every point was at once attacked and guarded. Every possible combination of assault and defense was worked. Every thrust was met and returned. The excitement of it, for the players and for the world as well, which was kept fully advised by the press, was simply terrific.

Still the coffee came streaming into New York on ship after ship, still the prices went up and up, point by point. The pile of the two men ran down and down. There wasn’t much of it left when, about the middle of December, the astonishing news was suddenly sprung upon the world that Germany and England had instituted a so-called peaceful blockade of the coasts of Brazil in order to get their claims against that nation adjusted. Tillottson and Johnstone heaved a long sigh of relief when this news was flashed over the wires. It meant salvation for them. For the first time in his life the former had become nervous. He was playing for such a stake, you see. Old Johnstone was entirely composed.

“Don’t worry,” he said, often, “about the loss of the money, old man. If it goes we can make some more.”

“I don’t care a hang for the money,” returned Tillottson, “and you know it. It’s the lady.”

"In course, in course."

"I'll say this much, Joe, I never was so scared in my life."

"Gosh, you must love her!" said his friend, who measured Tillottson's devotion by this strange admission of timidity, the like of which he had never heard from his lips before.

"I do. Let's see how much capital is left."

"About two millions, I reckon."

"All right. Suppose we go down to see Cutter about the future. This strain is terrible on me. If my hair wasn't white now I don't know what would happen. It's the woman, you know. I think I can face anything better than a woman, especially since I——"

"In course, in course; you're all right, old man," said Johnstone, consolingly; yet there was a touch of pity in his glance as they threaded their way through the crowds on Nassau street.

It was a place which excited the admiration and wonder of Mr. Johnstone.

"It seems to me it's like a mountain cañon on a small scale," he was wont to observe, "only there's a river of people instead of water roarin' through the bottom of it."

Mr. Cutter had heard the news from Brazil as soon as the partners. The Street had heard it also. The wires were smoking with telegrams to South America, but in vain. Not a pound of coffee could be shipped. It had been the plan of Livingstone to hold the Brazilian coffee to the last minute, then bring it up to New York in fleets and unload it on the market within the last few days in such quantities that no individual operator, nor even a combination of operators, could buy what was offered. But he waited just too long, for the blockade shut Brazil as hard and fast as if she were behind a burglar-proof door with a set time-lock on it. Not a pound of coffee could be obtained from South America unless the blockade were raised at once.

The harbors of Rio, Bahia and Santos were crowded with ships, many of them loaded ready to sail, anx-

iously awaiting orders. Not one of them could clear or pass the blockade. Petty acts of aggression on one side met with resistance on the other, and soon the coast was lined with flame and smoke and battering guns. The fiction of a peaceful blockade was blown into the air.

Livingstone, through the Parbuckles, his London connections, moved every influence at his command to get the English government to raise the blockade, or at least to make an exception for coffee. If he could get coffee he could pay the debts of Brazil, and he would be willing to do so. His efforts were fruitless. He was fought by powerful foemen direct at headquarters, who had other axes to grind, and who cared nothing for coffee or its corners one way or the other. Besides, the Brazilians had made two or three aggressive moves which the British people resented, and which stirred the popular mind to such an extent that no government could have existed for an hour which even suggested the possibility of a backdown, or of a concession.

It was too late. The merchants in Brazil, entirely unconscious of the impending situation before the blow fell, wrung their hands in anguish. Coffee had reached the record-breaking point of twenty-five cents a pound, and the price was still mounting. They had several million pounds on hand, and could not sell one bag. It was maddening. They, too, offered to pay the debts of their government instantly, but the Brazilian authorities had feelings of pride also, and the offer was refused, lest it might be called payment under duress. The President of Brazil was making capital out of the situation on his own account, posing as a patriot, and he did not care anything for the coffee dealers.

The United States government even brought pressure to bear upon the Allied Powers in the shape of the Monroe Doctrine, and it finally succeeded in getting their assent to arbitrate the affair, pending which, however, at the instance of the Emperor William of Ger-

many, to whom the Monroe Doctrine was a pet aversion, they decided to maintain the blockade while the negotiations were being carried on. Nothing could be effected before the first of the year, in any event. The coffee in Brazil had to stay there.

In his despair, Livingstone turned to Europe. Unfortunately for him the year had been an unusually prosperous one. The commerce of the world had increased beyond the expectation of every one, and almost every available vessel was already engaged in the carrying trade. A great number of ships were held in the blockaded ports of Brazil, but every tramp steamer that could be secured was chartered as fast as could be done, to bring coffee from England and France to the United States. The weather, too, happened to be terrific. Fate, or Providence, seemed to be fighting on the side of the bulls, and the freighters which usually made a ten-day passage found it difficult to get across in fourteen. Still, enough coffee came in to run the resources of the partners down, down, to a desperately narrow margin. What they would have done is impossible to say had not a new ally entered the arena.

The Honorable Reginald Kentigern, etc., making no secret of his intentions, joined the force of the bulls, to Livingstone's furious anger and apprehension. The Honorable Reginald, etc., had hesitated between Livingstone's counsel and that of his father, but had concluded at last, with the money the old man had given him, to take his advice. He knew nothing about the rules of the game. He simply went to his brokers, who happened to be honest as well as able, put his money in their hands, and told them to buy.

Therefore, in spite of the furious onslaughts of the bears, the bulls still bought. Every dollar of capital that Bertie could wrench from his legitimate business—and more!—was now in the deal. He could not borrow from any one. The capitalists knew how the situation stood. It was more than probable that the coffee corner was

made, and that nothing now could break it. No one would lend him any money on the strength of his chances. The thirty-first of December found him without an available dollar of capital. He was short on the market thousands of lots. All the money he had would not permit him to cover.

That wasn't the worst of it. Having access to the safe in which his sister's securities were kept, he had taken every one of the stocks, bonds and certificates upon which money could be raised, and had hypothecated them for the last dollar they would bear. Her fortune was embarked in the deal as well as his own. The day not only spelled ruin for him, but disgrace and shame. He had made a beggar of himself and had plunged his sister into poverty, and for nothing. He wondered—through a long, sleepless night, the successor of many—if it would not be better for him to blow out his brains then and there. Yet something in him, the spirit of the gambler clutching at a last hope, told him to hold on to the ultimate moment.

Certainly the other side, whoever was backing it up, must have nearly come to the end of its hitherto seemingly inexhaustible resources. If he could only get another million, five hundred thousand, two hundred thousand even, he might be saved. Where could he get it? The man was almost crazy in his desperation. If he could have done so he would have held anybody up on the street and taken the money from him at the pistol point. In that condition, tearing down Wall street toward the Coffee Exchange at eleven o'clock in the morning, the opening hour, he ran across Tillotson for the first time since he had ordered him to leave his office. It flashed into his mind that the man had money. He seized him by the arm, and drew him into the nearest of the great office buildings. It was crowded with men coming and going, but they found a corner away from the elevator, where they could exchange a few words in comparative privacy.

"I was a beast to you once," said Bertie. "I apologize. I called you a fortune-hunter. I'm sorry. I can put you in the way of making a great deal of money."

"How is that?" asked Tillottson, marking the other man's wretchedly unnerved appearance with savage joy; his revenge would certainly be a complete one.

"Have you any money?"

"I have."

"Let me have it. Or come with me into this coffee deal."

"What coffee deal?"

"Great God, man, where have you been? Don't you know that I've been fighting some unknown backer of Cutter, Drewitt & Co. in December coffee? That I am a bear in the market? To-day is the last day of the deal. If I can carry the thing on for this day I stand to make millions. If I can't, I lose everything. If you can raise a million, seven hundred thousand, five hundred thousand, for God's sake——"

"Livingstone," said Tillottson, quietly, but with a calculating ferocity that froze his listener's blood, "you insulted me once. I didn't kill you, but I swore I'd pay you back, and I'm going to. I've got you just where I want you. If you were any other man I'd have shot you when you threatened to have me kicked out of your office. Being as you're her brother, I'll only break you. I'm on the other side. I am the other side."

Without another word he turned on his heel and left him.

"Why," thought Bertie, when it was too late, "did I not appeal to him for Constance's sake!"

However, he had one final resource. He went to Smith-Pogis.

"Look here," he said, bluntly, "you're a bull. You've got to change and be a bear."

"Oh, really, don't you know——"

"Oh, stop that infernal stuttering, and don't be an idiot. If you can let me have some money I can break the corner to-day."

"But I'm on the other side, you know."

"What difference does that make? When I break the corner I'll reimburse you for your full loss, and double your investments besides. I'll do anything. How much have you got in?"

"About one hundred thousand."

"Dollars?"

"No, pounds."

"Have you any more?"

"Not another penny."

"Can't you get any more from your father?"

"Not a bit. He cables me I'm already too deep in the thing, and I ought to hedge on the other side. Are you in deep?"

"Over my head."

"Will it hit you hard?"

"I tell you I'm a beggar this moment unless I can get some money. If I could get five hundred thousand I should be all right."

"Why don't you get your sister to help you, then?"

Livingstone hesitated. Perhaps, by confiding in this young Englishman, he could work on his feelings and induce him to endeavor to get something from his father.

"All her money is in it, too."

"Did she put it in?"

"I—I—" Bertie hesitated. He was not a good liar. He had always been an honest man.

"You didn't put it in without her knowing it?"

"Yes," answered the miserable man.

The Honorable Reginald straightened up. With extraordinary volubility he fairly ripped out:

"Theft! By Jove! What a damned, infernal cad you are!"

"For God's sake, man, stop fooling about trifles! Whatever I am makes no difference. Every dollar my sister has will go down in the crash. She will be a beggar, and she doesn't know. You love her. Think of that."

"I'll see what I can do," said the Honorable Reginald, shortly, turning away.

"God bless you, old man, I'll be at the office or the Exchange. Hurry!" said Bertie, putting out his hand.

"It's nothing. I do it for Miss Liv-

ingstone, not for you. And I'd rather not shake hands with you, don't you know. I don't like the way you do business."

VII

THE SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS OF THE HONORABLE REGINALD

THE efforts of the Honorable Reginald on the cable were entirely fruitless. Indeed, his father, confident that enough coffee had been shipped during the last two weeks, if it could be delivered in New York, to break the corner, changed his views and cabled him to sell at once. He positively refused to send him any more money. The Honorable Reginald would have seen Bertie Livingstone, after the disclosure which had been made, brought to ruin with the utmost indifference, but, when it came to the question of Miss Livingstone, that was another matter. His anxiety for her welfare was as deep and genuine as his affection. He forgot all about his own stake, and began to cast about for some way to save her.

In his dilemma he, too, happened to meet Tillottson, for the latter could not keep away from the Exchange on this momentous day. Now, Smith-Pogis had a dim idea that Tillottson had money, and a positive assurance that Tillottson loved Miss Livingstone. Perhaps he could do something. He had passed him with a curt nod, and, in panic terror lest he might escape in the crowded street, he ran frantically after him, plunging into the mob, elbowing people right and left, his course followed by volleys of curses and imprecations. Fortunately, he caught Tillottson opposite one of the famous little chop houses of the region.

"Come in here," he said; "it's quiet here; I want to talk to you. It's a question of life and death."

His anxiety and alarm were plainly apparent. Tillottson was greatly surprised at the Englishman's agitation. He knew the Honorable Reginald was a bull—no secret had been made of that. The corner was made, and the Eng-

lishman's investment would bring him an enormous return. Tillottson was entirely at a loss to understand what was the cause of the other's trepidation.

"This—this coffee deal," began Smith-Pogis.

"It's all right," said Tillottson, reassuringly. "We have only one more day to carry it through. You're on the right side of the market, and you stand to make a lot of money on whatever you've got in."

"It's not myself I'm thinking about," said the other, resentfully. "It's Miss Livingstone."

"Miss Livingstone!"

"I said so, and I don't like to repeat it—here."

"What's she got to do with this deal?"

"Her money, you know. It's all in."

"Is she against us?"

"Certainly not. But her brother—"

Smith-Pogis hesitated, willing to spare Bertie, if possible. It was an ugly thing to have to tell, a nasty charge to lay at any man's door. Tillottson was entirely uncomprehending. He did not in the least understand. He was hurt beyond expression at the thought which instantly came to him from Smith-Pogis's halting explanation, that the woman he loved, for whom he was fighting, was herself against him.

"I don't understand," he began in a puzzled way. "Is she fighting the corner with her fortune?"

"No, not consciously, but her brother—damn him, he's a thief!"

"You don't mean that he——?"

"Yes, that's the size of it."

"Has he put it all in?"

"Every dollar of it."

"Did she speak of it to you?"

"No."

"She doesn't know you know?"

"Not unless he told her, and I fancy he hasn't."

"Who told you, then?"

"He admitted it himself. He did his best to persuade me to get in on his side and get something from London. I tried, but can't get a cent.

Unless he can get some money he says he's ruined. I wouldn't care a hang for him, infernal cad, but his sister will be ruined too, you know. I want to break up this corner, somehow, to save her, don't you know. I'd break it myself by selling, only I haven't got enough in to do more than shake the market."

"What do you want of me?" asked Tillottson, quietly.

The color had quite gone out of his cheeks at the Honorable Reginald's statement, but the Englishman blundered on, unnoticing.

"I want you to lend me some money, so that Livingstone can break the corner and get back his sister's money."

"But all you've got is in that corner, too."

"What's the odds? Besides, Bertie offered to pay back all my stock and all the profits that might have been made, if I'd only help him bust the corner."

"And what do you intend to let him do in case he breaks the corner? Would you take the money?"

There was more depending on that answer than Smith-Pogis dreamed.

"Not a damned cent of it!" he said, briefly, with a fluency that made Tillottson wish to hug him. "All I want now is to get back Miss Livingstone's fortune. The money I have in it can go hang."

"Smith-Pogis," exclaimed Tillottson, extending his hand at the same time, "you are a sport and a gentleman. I'm proud to know you."

"Oh, that's all right. Will you help?" cried the Honorable Reginald, shaking the other man's hand.

"I haven't got a dollar on earth that I can devote to this purpose," said Tillottson, gravely. "I've been operating myself, and have got only money enough left to cover my margins."

"Oh, God!" groaned the young Englishman. "Then she's lost!"

"Hold on! Will you swear on your honor as a gentleman never to tell what I say to you?"

"Yes, yes, of course."

"Well, I'm controlling the coffee market."

"You!"

"I am the corner."

"By Jove, you don't say so?"

"I do."

"You amaze me! What are you going to do? Will you give back Miss Livingstone's money?"

"Smith-Pogis, think a minute. Would she take it?"

"Of course not."

"I can only save her by breaking the corner."

"But that will ruin you."

"That's all right. It'll save her."

"Tillottson," said the Honorable Reginald, extending his hand this time, "by Jove, old chap, I want to tell you that I never met a finer gentleman than you are! If Bertie Livingstone is a cad and a thief, you're the other thing. This is jolly fine of you, old man. I wish I might tell her."

"If you do, I'll blow the top of your head off!" said Tillottson, truculently. "Now, you get to cover. I don't want any one to know this. You've been a buyer. Now you sell the minute the market breaks, and get back all you can. You're bound to lose something, but I think you'll get out nearly clear."

"Not I, by Jove," returned the Honorable Reginald, lightly. "I'm in to stay, and I'll stay till the end."

"Don't be a fool, young man."

"I shall not. You're in to lose for her. So am I."

"Well, then, for God's sake don't say anything about it to any one. I'll break that corner myself at once. Trust me."

"How are you going to do it?"

"I'll work it all right. Watch the market go down. Take my advice, and get out."

"I shall not," replied Smith-Pogis, stubbornly.

"Smith-Pogis, you're certainly a dead game sport."

"Thank you, old chap. Where are you staying?" asked the young Englishman, as the American rose to leave him.

"I have a room on Broadway," giving him the number.

"If you don't mind," said Smith-Pogis, "I'd like jolly well to call upon you. I want to see more of you. You're a ripping old chap and all that, you know."

"I'll be there only for a few days, now. I've got to hustle down to Brazil and get to work again after this thing is done. But I should like to see you, if you want to come to see me."

Shortly after the Coffee Exchange opened that day, the excitement began. In the midst of it Bertie Livingstone was summoned to his office by an imperative message from his sister, who had driven down to see him on important business. Under other circumstances, he would have paid no attention to such a message, but now it was impossible for him to refuse. He went as a condemned man might go to his executioner. He tore himself reluctantly from the Exchange, and plunged through the storm and snow into his private office.

"Bertie," said Miss Constance, without preliminaries, "I've been thinking about this deal very much lately."

She saw how haggard and worn, even broken, he looked, and she pitied him profoundly. She had watched him during the past few weeks with growing uneasiness, too.

"Yes, Constance."

"You know I never speculate with any of my money. Tell me how deep you are in this deal."

"As deep as a man can get in."

"And if you cannot break the corner?"

"Everything I have will be lost."

"Well, then," said Miss Livingstone, reluctantly, and with a long sigh, "I think it is my duty to help you in this affair."

She had not heard a word from Tillottson, and yet in spite of herself she had somehow connected him with this coffee deal. He was familiar with conditions in Brazil, and had often spoken to her about coffee-growing in a small way, and she had an idea that he might endeavor to make his millions in that manner. But she had no accurate knowledge, and in the uncertainty she

believed it her duty to assist her brother.

There was no doubt that she was in love with Tillottson now. The feeling he felt for her was matched by her own for him. Yet she felt strongly persuaded, in spite of her positive knowledge of the state of her affections, that she should do what she could for her brother, especially as she had no assurance as to what Tillottson was doing. And, even supposing that he did fail in his endeavor, she would have money enough for both!

She had called her carriage and driven through the furious storm of snow and sleet then raging to proffer her help to Bertie. It was growing almost to blizzard proportions, the weather that day, but the square in front of the little Coffee Exchange was crowded, for the day was to decide the great deal. Her coachman had great difficulty in getting through to her brother's office in Hanover Square.

"Bertie," she said, "take my securities, as many as are necessary—take them all, if you wish; only, leave me a little to get along on in case you fail. You know I have never been used to poverty, but take all the rest. We must stand by each other."

Bertie buried his head in his hands, and groaned.

"Constance," he said, "they are all gone."

"Bertie!"

"Every one of them."

"You didn't take them?"

"I did."

"Without my consent?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Bertie, are you a——?"

"I am—a—thief. And a ruined thief, as well."

"The ruin is nothing. We can get over that. But that you—my brother—my father's son—my God!" whispered the woman.

"Constance!" cried the man, "if I could only get a little money—a million, five hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, even, I could break the corner even now, and we would be saved."

"Have you tried?"

"Everywhere. I even went to Tillottson."

"Mr. Tillottson! What did he say?"

"He said he wanted to break me."

"Is he on the other side?"

"Yes."

"Oh, that you—" murmured his sister, dazed by this confirmation of her suspicions. "How could you go to that man after the way you treated him?"

"Constance, I could crawl to anybody to get money now."

"My jewels?"

"They wouldn't bring enough to make it worth while. You were never fond of diamonds. I wish to God you had been!"

"Is there nothing to be done?"

"Nothing, except to go to smash."

"When?"

"When the Exchange closes at three this afternoon."

The man's misery and despair were appalling. He had been a proud man, an honest one as well, and the temptation to which he had yielded had been a great one. It had seemed impossible for him to lose. Yet he had not only lost his own money, his sister's, also, but he had robbed the Livingstone name of its ancient honor.

"Well," said Constance, resolutely, at last rising to her feet—she had lived long enough in society to be something of a philosopher—"there is no use repining over it now. If the money is gone we'll have to do something—work, I suppose. I do not mind the loss of the money so much, but the disgrace—well, I'll say no more about it now."

"Work? Constance! There is Tillottson. He loves you."

"Do you think I would marry him now?" cried the woman. "Now that I am a pauper—a dishonored pauper?"

The anguish in her heart made her merciless to her brother. And for the first time in her life she looked more than her age.

"I refused him when I had millions," she went on. "Should I take him when all is gone? What was

that epithet you flung at him? 'Fortune-hunter'! I may be shamed, but I have some pride left. There is nothing more to be done—nothing, nothing. Good-bye."

"Constance!" cried Bertie, starting after her with hands outstretched. "Forgive me!"

"Not now, Bertie."

"At least shake hands with me."

"I would rather not now."

With her head erect she swept by him, and so out of the room. He was alone. He concluded not to go back to the Exchange. What was the use? Everything had been tried—everything was lost. He opened a private drawer in his desk. There lay a loaded revolver, a dainty little weapon of mother-of-pearl and nickel steel. He kept it for just such an emergency. He had made his last play, and was beaten. Now was the time. He lifted the weapon from its velvet bed and put it to his head. He held it there with unsteady hand, his finger on the trigger, but did not pull it. A moment or two more would not make any great difference.

He sat there in that magnificent office from which the noises of the street were so carefully excluded, thinking. This was the end—not only of himself, but of Constance as well. She would never survive the disgrace when his suicide made all known. It would be the end of the good old Livingstone name. Slowly he thrust the weapon nearer his right temple. His finger began to press the trigger.

What was that sound that broke in on the perfect stillness? The ticker on the other side of the desk! There was plenty of time for this. He laid the weapon down, and, hardly realizing what he did, mechanically walked over to it. It had no message but further disaster for him, he knew. Yet the habit was strong upon him. He took up the sliding ribbon of paper, and glanced at it. A quotation caught his eye. Great God, was the corner breaking? Some one had sold a thousand lots at a point off. He stared at the tape, fascinated. Again came the

ticking. The ribbon slid through his hand. One thousand more lots. Another point off. The corner was broken!

He tore through the streets like a madman. Across the square, bare-headed in spite of the furious storm, he forced his way through the great crowds until he reached the floor of the Exchange. Around the coffee pit pandemonium reigned. It was the centre, the vortex, of a seething maelstrom of passion. One sale succeeded another, and the market was going down. Down, down, down! The floor was a scene of wild excitement. Hoarse cries were blasted upward. The crowd of brokers heaved and surged and swayed like a human wave. The place was like a battlefield in the tense emotions in the air, the awful passions it evoked.

Screaming men were frantically shaking their nervous hands aloft before Drewitt, the junior partner of Cutter, Drewitt & Co., who was selling as imperturbably as he had bought. The Exchange was in a perfect roar. The sound of many voices was as the sound of many waters. Clothes were torn, a man fell and was trampled by the maddened crowd. The faces of some were white and bloodless. Others were engorged with blood. A kind of madness was in the air—and in the fighting men.

Outside on the street the news of the break had penetrated, and the shouts of the eager crowds drowned the noise of the tempest. Men fought and struggled to get back into the Exchange, but no one left the place for any purpose. The little visitors' gallery was packed as solidly as humanity could be squeezed together. And many spectators of the awful scene were women. Some of them fainted, and could with difficulty be succored.

Bertie Livingstone, as a person who could not be denied, with superhuman energy forced himself through the crowds till he reached the pit, and then he began that tremendous onslaught which, before the bell for closing rang, demolished the corner. Coffee fell ten

cents a pound in two hours. No one could imagine why it was, but the fact was certain, nevertheless. The bears had won, in the face of certain defeat, too. The Livingstone fortune, and the Livingstone honor—at least in the eyes of the world—were saved. The great coffee deal was over. Bertie Livingstone had trebled his fortune for himself and his sister. He had paid for his gains, however, with the loss of his self-respect. He had bartered for them the ancient honor of his once unsullied name.

But he was saved. The corner was broken. As the bell struck and the long agony was over, with the assurance of safety, he staggered toward the wall, reeling like a drunken man, until he collapsed utterly and fell prostrate in a senseless heap before the telephone he had been striving to reach.

VIII

THE ONLY WAY OUT OF IT FOR A GENTLEMAN

THE communication which the engineer had received from the Honorable Reginald was the most startling which had ever been made to him in his long career. For the moment he was conscious of but one thing, that the brilliant deal which he had engineered and all but carried to a successful conclusion meant the ruin in fortune of the woman for whom he had been waging his great battle. Coincident with this apprehension the conviction sprang into his mind that at all hazards she must be saved.

Accustomed to meet dangers and to overthrow them on the instant, he had answered Smith-Pogis as he had, giving him a positive assurance that Miss Livingstone should not be the sufferer in the affair. There was only one way to effect that, he very well knew. The corner should be broken. With that decision his own hopes went blowing down the wind. It is not every man who can give up all that life holds dear to him with so little outward

manifestation of emotion as Tillottson then presented.

His keen mind perceived at once all the phases of the situation. If his corner ruined Miss Livingstone he felt that there was no way in which he could make up to her for the loss of her fortune. He could not return to her the money Bertie had embezzled, for he knew she would never receive it. He divined that, having refused him when she had money and believed he had not, she would never accept him when he had money and she had none. He was equally resolved that if he could not make good his declaration to match her fortune with his own, nothing could induce him to ask her for a decision on that suspended question. He would not even accept one under the circumstances.

Half an hour before he had been absolutely confident of success. There was still left to his partner and himself a sum sufficiently large to take care of any chance arrivals of coffee during the day which Bertie might get hold of if he could get any more money and deliver to him. The fearful storm made it probable that such arrivals would be small, and there seemed to be no way to defeat him. He had expected to make his long-deferred call on Miss Livingstone early on the morrow, with the evidences of success in his hands; and there was something in the glance she had thrown upon him as she had given him her hands and wished him good luck that had made him almost certain as to what her answer would be.

Now it was all over. Whether he won or lost she was not for him. It never occurred to him that if he broke his own corner and sacrificed his fortune for her, he would thereby establish such a claim upon her as no woman could resist, especially if—although he did not divine this—the woman had grown to love him as Miss Livingstone did. Indeed, it didn't seem to him anything of a sacrifice. That phase of the affair did not present itself to him. His course was simple and obvious. No gentleman,

no matter what might be at stake, could so conduct himself as to ruin an innocent woman—even if he did not love her more than life.

It did not occur to Tillottson that Bertie had ruined the innocent woman by his unlawful appropriation of her property. So long as he knew about it himself the onus of the deed would be upon him. So in these few moments the little man, not without anguish the deeper because he gave no outward expression of it—your still waters run deep—gave up his fortune and his love for the sake of a woman; and he gave up something more, which, while it did not weigh in importance with the first two, was still a thing for which he had long thirsted.

No man had ever treated Tillottson as Bertie Livingstone had, and lived to boast of it. The relationship of this man to the woman Tillottson adored had saved him from personal punishment which would have eliminated him from any more deals on the Exchange, but Tillottson had worked for revenge. He had marked with intense satisfaction that Livingstone would be the greatest sufferer by his successful achievement. He was a very human man, was Tillottson, you see.

And now he would be forced to give up love, fortune and revenge.

Fortunately for his peace of mind, he had not a great deal of time to reflect on the situation. Action prompt and immediate was demanded of him. He wasn't quite sure, either, how he was to bring about the desired results. At any rate, the time for dreaming was past. It was getting on toward noon, and whatever was to be done must be done before three o'clock. First of all, it was necessary to see his partner. They had appointed to meet at twelve o'clock at the bank. It was not quite that time, but in the hope that Johnstone might be there he hastily repaired to Merrill & Frost's and there by great luck he found him.

It is a singular commentary, not only on the friendship which subsisted between Tillottson and Johnstone, who had been partners in vari-

ous operations for twenty years or more, but also upon the ideas of chivalry which were cherished by such soldiers of fortune as these two, that not the faintest doubt of Johnstone's willingness to sacrifice his own fortune in the vast deal crossed his mind.

"Ed"—Tillottson was usually known as "Ed" among his friends and acquaintances, although that was not his name, because when he was a boy he had hated "Elijah," and having no better middle name than "Draco," he had got in the habit of signing his name "E. D.," which the boys turned into "Ed"—"Ed," said old Johnstone, "I never enjoyed a game so much before in all my life. We've got 'em where the hair's short, and nobody can beat us. We stand to make a pot of money, too, though it ain't the amount, but the fun of the game that ketches me. I'm obleeged to you, old chap, for having interduced me to this thing. It beats anything I was ever in, and——"

"Joe," said Tillottson, gravely, "I'm sorry to tell you the game's up."

"No!" cried Johnstone. "Are we beat?"

He didn't change a muscle or an expression.

"Well, we had a damned fine run for our money," he continued.

"We're not beaten; nothing on earth could do that."

"What's the matter, then?"

"We've cornered the coffee, we own everything in sight, the price is jumping up every minute, but——"

"But what? What's going to happen? What's going to beat us?"

"I am. We are, ourselves."

"I don't ketch on."

"I'm going to bust the market myself."

"The hell you say!"

"Yes. It is hell, old man, but I—I have to."

"What are you goin' to do it for?" asked old Johnstone, curiosity more than anything else in his voice. "It's a damned pity, just when we've got all the cards in our own hands, to throw over the deal, ain't it?"

"It sure is, old man, but reasons——"

"Oh, well," philosophically, "if you've got reasons that are good enough, I suppose it'll have to go through. What air they?"

"You know why I went into this thing? I've told you the story, and we've talked it over. It was for the sake of a woman."

"Yes, and a blame fine woman, too. She's a handsome gal, she is, Ed. You're a lucky feller, I reckon. I got my peepers on her when she was goin' into her brother's office this mornin' wrapped in furs and diamonds and all sorts of things. Gosh, she's a oner!"

"How did you know her?"

"Somebody told me 'twas her. But go on."

"Well, that white-livered brother of hers——"

"The one that said he would have you kicked out of his office?"

"The same."

"I never could see, Ed, how you could stand that. Bein' so quick on the shoot and so hot-tempered, you know, as you used to be——"

"You've never been in love."

"Yes, I have; heaps of times."

"Not like this."

"I reckon not. Fire away."

"Well, he's taken her money, ten million, and thrown it into this corner to beat me. He stole it. She didn't know it, you know. If I hold the corner it's going to ruin her. Now, Joe, no gentleman would ruin an innocent woman for his own gain."

"Did she tell you?"

"Of course not. I haven't seen her since—nothing would make her say a word about it to me. I don't even believe she knows it yet. I learned it from the Englishman."

"That maverick, that little tender-foot?"

"Maverick he may be, Joe, but he's a man, for all that. He showed himself a gentleman this morning. He's on our side to the extent of about half a million, which he stands to lose, and which he's game to lose for her sake, too. Oh, there's no doubt about this

thing. In the first place, I always knew that Bertie boy was a pup. So, with your permission, I'm going to break the corner to save her."

"You have it, old man," said Johnstone, cheerfully. "You went in this thing for love, and I went in it for fun. I've never had so much fun in my life, and when I git some money I'm goin' in it agin."

"I never am," returned Tillottson, gravely. "I'm sick of such things. I've had enough to last me. I only went in it for her sake——"

"Ed, if you tell that gal what you've done, you'll win the game with her, all right."

"Well, I'll never tell. What do you take me for? No, I give it all up—her, money, and the chance to get even with that brother of hers."

"Ed Tillottson, I always knowed you was a high-souled gent, but blame me if I ever thought you was such a fine one. It's wuth five millions to hev an opportunity to tell you that my opinion of you is higher to-day than it ever was before—and it's always been mighty high. It's harder on you than it is on me, pardner. I'm only losin' money, you're losin' all. I can make more," he continued, grasping the other man's hands, "so, sail in and count on me for anything."

"All right, old man," said Tillottson, briefly. "Your sacrifice is greater than mine, for you wouldn't have been in this thing but for me, to please me——"

"And for the fun, too, Eddie, boy; don't forgit that."

"Well, you'll have fun enough before it is over," answered Tillottson, with a ghastly attempt at a smile.

"How are you going to break the corner?"

"There's only one way. That's to throw our holdings on the market."

"How is it goin' to be done?"

"Through Cutter."

"Suppose he won't do it? It seems to me I suspicion he's been mixing a leetle in this affair on his own hook."

"I warned him not to do it," replied Tillottson. "I've cautioned him

again and again to stay out of it except as our agent, and if he's gone back on my instructions he'll have to look out for himself. He's got to break that corner."

"But how are you goin' to make him?"

Tillottson reached his hand back to his pocket, where, contrary to the supposition of Bertie Livingstone, he had not kept his handkerchief, and pulled out a serviceable weapon, smaller than he was accustomed to carry when at work, but one meant for business.

"With this," he said.

"But kin you?"

"I can. The man is a physical coward. I sized him up for that, long since."

"You're right. So did I," assented Johnstone.

"I'll get him alone in his office, and threaten to blow out his brains if he don't do what I want."

"Don't I come in this thing somewhere? Can't you work me in some place? I'm handy with my gun, you know."

"Of course you do," said Tillottson. "The minute Cutter begins to sell, that is, to order sales made over the telephone, his door will be besieged by a mass of men, and I want you to stand outside and keep them off. Will you do it?"

"Will I? I'll hold off the whole of New York. Gosh, this here dealin' in stocks is the most excitin' thing I ever tackled."

"Well, it's getting late now. It's after twelve, and the Coffee Exchange closes at three. We'd better get a move on us. Is your gun loaded and ready?"

"Ed," said the other, reproachfully, "did you ever know me when my artillery wasn't in workin' order and ready for use? Go 'long! I'll tell you another thing, too. I've got a permit to carry a weapon, too."

"What did you get it for?"

"I'm afeered of bein' held up by some of these Wall-street desperadoes," laughed Johnstone.

IX

THE HORRIBLE MISERY OF MR. CUNNINGHAME CUTTER

MR. CUNNINGHAME CUTTER, after mature deliberation, had decided that it was for his best interests to play fair with his principal. He ordinarily did play fair unless he were persuaded beyond peradventure that it was not to his interests to do so. He had a grave suspicion as to the coffee deal when it was first inaugurated, but as he had been informed at last through Tillottson of what was to be the deciding factor, the near approach of the Brazilian blockade, he had become fully impressed with the entire certainty of success; so much so, in fact, that, disregarding his principal's repeated injunctions, he had entered the deal on his own hook.

Confident that the corner would be carried through, he had invested in it all his private fortune and every cent he could beg or borrow, and he had done even more. He was the custodian of certain trust funds, and these also he threw into the gap.

Two courses had been open to him. He could either betray Tillottson to Bertie Livingstone at the last moment and make Bertie's influence with his sister the price of the betrayal, or he could ruin Bertie in conjunction with Tillottson, and then assist him to his feet again for the same end. The latter was safer, and therefore he chose it.

For a wonder, being a scoundrel, Cunninghame Cutter did not believe that Bertie Livingstone would be a party to anything so underhand as the betrayal of a principal by a broker. As it happened, Cutter and Livingstone were quite on a par from an ethical standpoint; but Cutter, of course, did not know that. Livingstone's honesty was of higher degree than Cutter's, but when it came to the crucial moment they were both thieves. Perhaps Cutter may stand higher than Livingstone, for Livingstone was simply thieving to avoid

ruin, while Cutter was thieving for the sake of a woman. However, the distinction is of little moment. The results were the same. We have seen how Livingstone had come face to face with ruin. Cutter had no experience of that kind—yet.

At twelve o'clock on the last day of December he regarded the situation as safe beyond the possibility of failure. All they had to do was to hold up the market until the Exchange closed, and then settle up. The profits would be enormous. His legitimate share in the way of commissions would be very great, and he also stood to win an immense sum through his own private speculation.

The dream that he had cherished since he first met Miss Livingstone some years before seemed to be in a fair way of realization. Of course, there was Tillottson to be reckoned with, but he fancied he could easily dispose of him. Mr. Cutter made the unusual mistake, for him, of underestimating the ability of his rival. He had no hesitation in considering himself a foregone victor in any trial of strength between them. After the deal was over he could find some means to dispossess Tillottson of his fortune. He flattered himself that he had gained the confidence of the other man, and that the successful consummation of their brilliant speculation would establish him in the very highest possible position in the engineer's mind, so that it would be easy to wreck him.

As it happened, however, the trial of strength came sooner than he had expected, in a way which was absolutely impossible for him to foresee, and Tillottson attacked him on the very side in which he was weakest.

Although the corner was practically made and but three hours remained through which to carry it, it was yet necessary to watch every move carefully. Drewitt, the junior partner, who was really not much more than a chief clerk, since Cutter was the whole firm, was stationed on the floor of the Exchange with instructions to report instantly anything unusual, and be prepared to

execute any commissions. The situation was too tense, the excitement too great, for any thought of luncheon.

Cutter, Drewitt & Co. controlled the market absolutely, and such small lots as were offered were instantly snapped up. Contrary to expectations, one ship did get in, but her cargo was a mere drop in the bucket. It had been bought up at once that morning. Several ships had been signaled by wireless telegraphy, the Marconi system, but it was a foregone conclusion that they would not arrive in the face of the storm then blowing, and, if they did, by straining every nerve the partners had enough money to take care of their cargoes. The situation from Cutter's point of view was faultless, when to him entered Messrs. Tillottson and Johnstone.

The clerks in the outer room, knowing their employer to be alone, had ushered the two men into the private office without ceremony. Of course, that Tillottson and Johnstone were backing the deal was known to all the clerks, although the secret had been so well kept that the outside world had not dreamed of it. The two men came into the office wearing expressions of unusual gravity.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Cutter, politely, rising at the same time. "Be seated. I suppose you realize that we have achieved the impossible, and that the market is cornered. You will more than double your capital when the Exchange closes at three o'clock. The bears are running away. There is nothing under the sun that can break the corner now. I think I may say that we have engineered this deal in a faultless way, and I say, too, that you have backed me up nobly."

"Mr. Cutter," said Tillottson, abruptly, "the corner must be broken."

"My dear Mr. Tillottson, are you aware of what you are saying?"

"Perfectly. The corner must be broken. We're here to direct you to break it."

He looked interrogatively at Johnstone.

"Right ye are, pardner," said the old man.

"But, gentlemen, I don't understand."

"'Tain't necessary that you should," said Johnstone. "We're here to give orders, not explanations. Explainin' is allus dangerous."

For once Cutter's self-possession deserted him. He stared at Johnstone more in amazement than anything else, for he could scarcely realize the situation yet.

"Excuse me, Joe," said Tillottson. "I think something is due Mr. Cutter. I propose to explain to him, with your permission."

"You have it. Go ahead."

"Mr. Cutter, I learned an hour ago that—of course you will consider this strictly confidential?"

Mr. Cutter bowed. His head was whirling with the important news, which as yet he did not fully comprehend.

"Mr. Bertie Livingstone has put in all his sister's securities in his endeavor to fight us—without her knowledge or consent, I mean. If we hold on she is ruined. I wouldn't care a hang for him, but I can't bring Miss Livingstone to poverty. My partner and I will be no parties to the ruin of an innocent woman. So we are here to break that corner."

"Impossible!" cried Cutter; "you don't know what you say. Why, man, you will be ruined, absolutely ruined! Every dollar you have on earth will be swept out of your hands."

"We understand that, of course."

"And you are willing to give up your entire fortune? Think! Are you going to break up this magnificent deal just when you have brought it to a triumphant fruition? Is all your labor, anxiety, force, to count for nothing? For a mere scruple, for a quixotism? Are you going to throw away the greatest chance that has ever occurred in the history of the Coffee Exchange? I don't believe it. I can't understand it. It means ruin! You will be beggared——"

"Mr. Cutter, as our agent," inter-

rupted Tillottson, calmly, "I take it that you are doing the correct thing in laying before us the consequences of our action, and we thank you for your caution. It is your business to save us if you can. In this case, I tell you, you can't. We know all about it. We'll abide the consequences, whatever they are. The corner must be broken and Miss Livingstone's fortune saved."

"But your fortune, man!"

"I have a greater interest than that expressed by any sum of money," returned Tillottson, quietly; "the fortune must go."

"I cannot do it!" gasped Cutter.

"You must!"

"How? How?" he quivered, throwing an appealing glance at the clock, hoping to save time.

"By telephoning to your representative in the Exchange to sell coffee, and keep on selling."

"Man, do you know the price will tumble the instant the bears learn that I am selling?"

"I do."

"I shall be ruined!" groaned Cutter, hoarsely.

"We've thought of that," said Tillottson, "and we've figured that we've money enough left to take care of all our options, and to pay you all you may require in our behalf."

"It isn't that! Every dollar I have on earth is in that corner."

"I told you he'd play us tricks, Ed," said Johnstone.

"I have not played you false!" cried Cutter. "When I saw the corner was all but made I put my own money in it, and every dollar I could borrow or scrape up."

"I told you not to do it," said Tillottson, sternly; "I warned you to keep out of this deal. If you've gone in on your own hook in spite of what I told you, I'm sorry for you, but that doesn't change my determination a bit. I'd rather ruin you than her, you see."

Mr. Tillottson observed with great mental pain that Mr. Cutter was made of different stuff than the Honorable Reginald.

"Now, we've done enough talking," he continued; "it's getting on toward one o'clock. We'd better begin."

"But how?" cried Cutter, his face as white as death, perspiration standing out on his forehead in great beads.

"Through the telephone, just as you did two months ago."

"I won't do it! You're mad, crazy!" cried Cutter, as an idea flashed into his mind. "I'll have you locked up until three o'clock."

The outer office was filled with clerks who were devoted to Cutter, and whose rise or fall depended upon Cutter's success, for, following his example, they had also entered the deal, although he, too, had cautioned them to keep out. It occurred to Cutter that he could call them in and have the two men restrained forcibly until three o'clock, when the corner would be made and they could do what they pleased. He struck a bell by his side, and, not satisfied with that, opened his mouth to speak.

He had made a mistake, however, in announcing his programme too early. He found himself confronted, as he turned his head toward the door, by two revolvers, which had been whipped out of two hip pockets with a suddenness that savored of magic.

"Utter a sound," said Tillottson, in a low voice which did not at all comport with his blazing glance, "and you're a dead man! Secure the door, Joe," he went on. "I've got him covered. Lively!"

With an agility that was astonishing in a man so old, Johnstone sprang to the door just in time to spring the latch before the clerk who had been summoned by the bell reached it.

"Tell him that you made a mistake; that you didn't want him," whispered Tillottson, as the man shook the door. "You were never nearer hell than you are now, Cutter," he added, laconically.

A deadly fear was on the broker.

"Did you call, sir?" cried the clerk outside.

Twice the prisoner strove to speak. Tillottson raised his arm and fairly

shoved the barrel of the revolver into his face.

"Answer!" he whispered.

"Mistake!" gasped the frightened man. "Never—mind."

"All right, sir," answered the clerk, turning away.

"Now, telephone!" said Tillottson. "Call up your private 'phone in the Exchange. Ask for Drewitt. We'll start in with one thousand lots."

"You will ruin me," groaned the broker, as, with trembling hands, he reached for the 'phone.

"I'm sorry to ruin you, but as between you and Miss Livingstone, you go every time. Besides, I warned you. It serves you right. This is my corner. You ought to have kept out of it. If you had obeyed orders you would have been all right. Have you got him?"

The broker nodded helplessly.

"Tell him what I say. You've sized me up. You know I'm not a man to threaten. By God, I'll murder you where you stand if you don't do just what I tell you!"

"Is that you, Drewitt?" gasped out Cutter, in a hoarse voice.

"Yes," answered the person on the other end of the wire. "Who is speaking?"

"Cutter."

"Oh! I didn't recognize the voice. What's the matter?"

"The——"

Cutter shot one agonized glance toward the ruthless Tillottson.

"Go on!" said the engineer, laying his hand on Cutter's neck. By this time he had the barrel of the pistol against the latter's temple.

"This is a double-acting weapon, and a hair-trigger," he said, in his softest and yet most truculent voice. "Tell him the corner must be busted."

"The corner is busted," whispered the man; "sell in one thousand lots at once."

"Give me the private signal," Drewitt called out, so as to be perfectly certain that the order was from the proper person. As the miserable man gave the signal, "Tell him you will send him a written order, too," interrupted

Tillottson, opportunely enough, at this moment.

The telephone was an unusually good one, and the engineer had managed to catch a large part of the conversation, standing, as he had been, with his own ear close to the receiver. "Say that you will send it up at once, but he ain't to wait for it. Now, hang up the receiver."

"Mr. Tillottson," said Cutter, brokenly, "for God's sake, it's not too late! This will start a break, but if we hold off we can retrieve the thing. Think what you are doing."

"You fool!" said Tillottson. "Do you suppose I have not thought all about this thing? I know what I am doing, and I know what you're doing, too. Now, you write out an order to Drewitt to bust the corner wide open, right away; to sell in lots of a thousand every five minutes. I want the price slammed down."

"Mr. Tillottson—" began Cutter.

"No talk now! Write it out!"

"It's against the rules of the Exchange."

"Damn the rules of the Exchange! I'm playing this game now by my own rules. Write!"

Cutter would have given his soul for an ounce of physical courage. Johnstone was an old man, Tillottson a small one. He was big enough for both of them. Never had his nervous disability played him a more scurvy trick. His hands trembled so that he could scarcely write. In fact, when the first order for selling was submitted Tillottson rejected it, and made him prepare another. The little man's manner was simply ferocious. Under the influence of his terror Cutter was completely subservient to his will. Another order was written and signed which was sufficiently firm to pass muster. At any rate, it would have to do.

"Johnstone," said Tillottson, who had assumed, as was his right, the leading position in the little drama in the private office, "take this to the outer office and tell the clerk—what's his name, Cutter?"

"Renfrew."

"Tell Renfrew to send it to Mr. Drewitt at once. Then you stand outside the door and keep everybody out of this room. Under no circumstances let them even get a peep in. I suppose there'll be a crowd around this office in a short time to know what this is all about. You just keep them back. Don't explain."

"I'll explain with this," grimly answered Johnstone, lifting his gun.

He had been enjoying the situation hugely. Never had he witnessed or participated in a greater game than this one. He had entirely forgotten his millions, which, after all, was perhaps the most philosophical view to be taken. If he had to lose he might as well get all the fun out of it he could. A messenger was duly despatched to Mr. Drewitt with the order, and then the three settled themselves to await developments.

X

MR. CUTTER WATCHES THE TICKER
WHILE MR. JOHNSTONE KEEPS THE
DOOR

OLD Johnstone settled himself comfortably in a chair outside the door in the large hallway, or anteroom, between the private and public offices. Tillottson and the broker sat side by side in the inner office. The miserable Cutter made several attempts to engage his intimidator in conversation, but his venture was sternly silenced by Tillottson. Indeed, the latter would not let him make a move. He allowed him to do nothing except to answer the telephone. Drewitt reported so soon as he had sold the first thousand lots, and immediately received orders to sell another similar amount. Before he had disposed of this one he got the written order to continue the sale.

Greatly surprised, but with implicit confidence in Cutter's judgment—indeed, he had not been admitted into his partner's personal ramifications in

the deal—he coolly proceeded to carry out the orders, entirely unaware that it spelt ruin for him, too. As he did so he transmitted information, via the telephone and his subordinates, from time to time, of the state of the rapidly falling market.

But there was in Cutter's private office a more speedy indicator even than the telephone, and that was the ticker. The wretched broker was marched over to the diabolical machine, the source of so much joy or so much misery to those who scan it, by his inexorable tormentor. Before it he was forced to read off his own doom. In gasping, broken, terrified accents he repeated aloud for Tillottson's benefit the story of the break and the rapid, continuous fall of the market.

No such scene had ever been enacted in a broker's office in New York. There he stood, having achieved the corner, watching the ruin of his own work; desperate, filled with murderous thoughts, but afraid, afraid; mad with anger and hatred, but impotent, powerless, undone!

The remorseless tape, with its lengthening record of his progressing ruin, spun interminably through his fingers. The figures blurred before his distracted vision. He longed to tear the paper to pieces, shatter the glass case into fragments, smash the machine to bits; but by his side stood the constraining force that compelled him to read on and on.

He was alone with Tillottson. Why could he not summon courage enough to master him? He cursed himself for his cowardice again and again. He swore that he would resist, but each moment found him still compliant. There was no help for him. He was as a lost soul on the brink of judgment.

As his manipulation of the market had been brilliant and successful, so was the downfall correspondingly rapid and terrific. The exultant bears would have no mercy. As the excitement in the Exchange was terrible, so even the steady rustle of the paper

spinning out from the machine seemed surcharged with it.

The silence was broken only by the ticking of the instrument and the hoarse voice of the frenzied man reading the quotations. Tillottson had time to think for almost the first time, and his situation was almost as pitiable as was that of the broker.

Cutter had forgotten his love-affair in the loss of his fortune and the consequent exposure that would result when his ruin made his defalcations public. The punishment for that already loomed large before him. Tillottson thought only of the woman. So the time dragged on.

"My God!" gasped Cutter, at last, "I can't stand this any longer! Since we are to fail I wish it were three o'clock and all over."

Something else was to happen, however, before that time. There was a sudden commotion outside the office. The anteroom of the private office was invaded by a crowd of people. The noise they made penetrated even through the heavy partitions. Cutter, with a flicker of hope, started to his feet in a vain endeavor to dart to the door. He might save something if he could only get away. But Tillottson was ready. The little man forced him back into a chair, shook him like a rat, and stood over him with that frightful weapon in his hand.

"Don't say a word," he whispered, "except what I tell you."

Some of the men outside had been on the bull side of the market, and, utterly unable to account for the sudden collapse of the corner which they had chosen of their own motion to support, they had, in their anger and desperation, come into the office for an explanation. With them were several reporters seeking to interview Cutter, and, if possible, find out the cause for the break. And the number was swelled by the clerks in the outer office. They were astonished at being confronted by a tall, lean, fierce-looking old man with a huge slouch hat on his head, holding a formidable pair of revolvers carelessly in his hands.

"We want to see Mr. Cutter!" burst out one man who had invested heavily.

"You can't see him now," answered Johnstone, coolly. "He told me to set out here and keep everybody from him."

"I must see him!" cried another man. "There is no reason on God's earth why this corner should not have gone through. What does he mean by doing business in this way? He has betrayed us!"

The speaker was one of the men whom Cutter had employed to deal with his private fortune, and the man's own fortune was at stake as well. His request was succeeded by another and another, until finally the crowd surged about old Johnstone with mingled curses, threats and appeals, to all of which he calmly turned a deaf ear. There was something in the appearance of the grim old man that seemed to promise death to any who might cross him.

"I'm settin' here," he said, making himself heard at last, "to keep this door and to keep you 'uns out. I'm goin' to do it. If any one of you makes another threatenin' move toward me I'll shoot him plum full of holes! It'll be self-defense in my case, and sure death to you. Keep cool. I'll let you in——"

"When?"

"When it's three o'clock," answered the old man, pulling out his watch. "It wants fifteen minutes to three now, I take it."

"It will be too late then! It's too late now!" screamed one of the men.

"I ain't got nuthin' to do with that."

"Cutter!" suddenly called out a loud voice from the background, intent to make itself heard in the private office, "what's the meaning of this break?"

"Tell him it is all right," said Tillottson.

"It isn't. They want an explanation," wailed the broker.

"Tell 'em to go to hell," said Tillottson; "they'll understand that."

"I can't! I can't! They'd kill me! They'll break the door down!"

"Not while Johnstone's got the drop on 'em."

"Boys," said one of the men outside, suddenly, "let's get out of this. Perhaps we can do something at the Exchange."

"No, you don't, gents," said Johnstone; "just all of you move over into that corner away from that outside door. Quick, as you value your lives!"

He rose to his feet, his pistols bearing point-blank on the crowd. Johnstone preferred the old-fashioned, single-acting weapon as being the most useful for intimidation in a crowd. And they heard him cock the two weapons before he pointed them at the crowd. The clicking of the hammers was a sound full of menace. There was something in the appearance of the old man that startled the New Yorkers. They were not used to this kind of a play. One by one they edged away from the door over into the corner of the room, the reporters going with the rest, their pencils flying furiously meanwhile. They did not often get hold of a story like that. There was no exit so long as old Johnstone chose to cover both doors, which from his position he could easily do. The men pressed into each other like a pack of terrified sheep.

"That's all right, boys, I'll not hurt you so long's you behave," said the old man, smiling genially. "I know it's a leetle uncomfortable for you in that corner. I'm runnin' a leetle private corner of my own, ye see. But it won't be fer long. I'll let you go at three o'clock. You kin bust it then."

"We'll have you arrested for carrying concealed weapons," cried one man.

"Not much you won't," said Johnstone, smiling. "I've got a permit to carry 'em to perlect my life from you New York bloods, and I'm perlectin' it now. Them moves of yours a minute sense was mighty threatenin' ones, gents. I'm really afeared for my life among sech bad men as you fellers be."

Somebody laughed—somebody who was not so deep in the affair as the others.

"I'm glad you kin laugh," said

Johnstone, gravely. "It's a most serious thing fer me."

"It's a damned outrage!" cried one man. "We won't submit to it! Let's make a rush at him!"

"Come along, gents, whenever you're ready."

The room was filled with noise now, with threats against Johnstone, against Cutter, appeals to him, though at that time nothing could have been done. In all the confusion no one ventured to get out of his place, though. No one wanted to be a target for a bullet from that smiling but terrible old man's weapons. No one wanted to evoke the first shot. Finally, the big clock in the outer office struck three. Coffee had dropped to the lowest point it had reached in three months. The corner was hopelessly and forever broken.

"You kin go now, gents," said Johnstone, calmly.

"We want to see Cutter."

"I reckon you can't see him yet," said the old man. "I don't think he'd care to see any one just now. You better mosey on."

He made a threatening movement toward them.

"Well, we can see him to-morrow," said one man. "We'll take it out of him then."

In a few moments the place was quite empty. Johnstone tapped gently on the door.

"They're gone," he said, as Tillottson opened it.

Poor Cutter sat in a huddled heap on his chair, completely crushed.

"If you will make out your accounts, Mr. Cutter," said Tillottson, "and let us know what we owe you on our futures, we'll send you a cheque for the balance."

Cutter said nothing.

"And," continued Tillottson, whose contempt for the poor wretch had increased during this interview, "I'd feel more sorry for you if you were a braver man. Look here!"

He snapped the revolver several times full in Cutter's face. The trigger clicked; there was no report. It had

not been loaded, after all. And that completed Cutter's disgrace.

"Mine was loaded, all right," said old Johnstone, looking reproachfully at his partner. "I'm allus ready for business. It's safer."

"I was afraid I might shoot him up if I'd left the cartridges in the chamber," answered the other. "I'll leave it with you, Mr. Cutter, as a souvenir of the occasion. It's probable that it's all you'll get out of the deal."

He flung the weapon on the desk and walked out of the office in great triumph, although he was a ruined man.

"Ed," said Johnstone, "that gun play of ours was about as fine as could be. I ain't had sech fun for a lot of years. I'm obleeged to you, old man. What's to do next?"

"Pull our freight for South America, and make some more money. The next steamer sails in three days. I'm going to reserve our state-rooms now."

"Will we have enough money?"

"Just enough to pay our bills here, and get us back to Rio."

"There's that mine of yours. Have you heard anything from it?"

"Not a thing. We'll attend to that when we get down there. Will you come down to the steamship agent's with me?"

"No, I guess not. I hev an app'intment. I think I'll mosey up-town. Say, ain't you goin' to see the lady?"

"No, I guess not. I think I'll just write her a note. Tell her I failed, and that's all."

"Um!" said Johnstone. "Well, good-bye."

XI

THE NEWS IS BROUGHT TO MISS LIVINGSTONE

Miss LIVINGSTONE's emotion as she drove away from her brother's office was almost untranslatable. Never having felt the pinch of poverty, first of all she could not appreciate what it meant to lose her property at one fell swoop. That experience would come later, and abide with her. She would

have plenty of time to get all the information going about that. So she dismissed it from her mind, or, if not that, it was overpowered by two other thoughts.

One was the shame and dismay involved in the revelation of her brother's dishonesty. That he had so far sullied the ancient honor of the Livingstones, upon which she had prided herself with a constantly increasing joy and satisfaction all the years of her life, was a source of the most profound grief and surprise. She believed that she would have cheerfully given up all her money to have her trust and confidence in her brother, in whom she had always taken such pride, restored once more. The loss of her fortune was nothing to her compared to that.

But there was another sense of loss that presently came across her with crushing force, before which even the evidences of her brother's infamy paled their ineffectual fires, and that was the loss of her lover. In one swift, sudden bound of recognition she realized that she loved him. Strange, unusual, impossible, as it had appeared to her, and as it would appear to her friends, she loved him with a passion which made all her previous experiences seem like the sentimentalities of a girl. Really, she must have loved him all the time, but unconsciously, she decided. Now, under the stimulus of Bertie's defalcations, with the consciousness of the consequent failure of her hopes, she was forced to admit it. That thought swept everything else out of her mind.

Tillottson had been perfectly right in his analysis of her character to Smith-Pogis. Having refused him when she was rich and he poor, she would not accept him when he was rich and she poor. She could not. Her pride was as great as his own. He had let the epithet, "fortune-hunter," come between them. There it stayed. He had taken a brave resolution in her presence that, until he could match her fortune with one as great, he would not expect an answer to his proposal. She would do the same. It was logic; it

was right. Honor required it. She felt that she had to be unusually nice on the point of honor under the circumstances.

She began to wonder if there was any way in which she could make some money; to try his plan for equalizing conditions between them. She realized there was none; her capital had been wiped out. Again, the sum Tillottson would realize from his coffee corner would be entirely beyond her capacity. Indeed, from what Bertie told her, she feared she would have to work for a mere living. Why had she been such a fool? Why had she not accepted him when he first offered himself? What a lot of trouble and sorrow and anxiety and shame would have been avoided!

She was very miserable in these thoughts, yet there was some melancholy compensation in her complete and absolute martyrdom. She wondered what Tillottson would say, or do, when he learned the truth, and she pictured herself bravely renouncing him, turning her back upon all the happiness before her, going out into the cold, hard world alone.

Some people get a great satisfaction out of martyrdom. It was surprising to her that she could, for no one would have imagined, not even herself, that she was that kind of a woman; but when money goes, and love goes, and trust in humanity goes, there is no telling what a woman may do, or think. She might as well strive for satisfaction somewhere, anyway. That was better than breaking down. She was not clear-headed enough, under these cumulative blows, definitely to determine anything, however; and, as a further analysis of her mental condition would scarcely be illuminating, we pass on.

She spent the afternoon packing up her trinkets and getting ready to move, not realizing that there was no pressing necessity for haste. She was very nervous and unstrung, and was really delighted when the card of the Honorable Reginald, etc., was put into her hand.

"Miss Livingstone," said the Englishman—and how he had developed, she thought, in the two months; he was calmer, more collected; his speech, she found, was much more fluent and easy; there was an added dignity to his boyish appearance. "Miss Livingstone," he began, shaking her hand.

"Mr. Smith-Pogis, aren't you a day too early? To-morrow will be the first."

"I did not come on that account. But your—brother——"

He hesitated, and looked at her sadly.

"Bertie? What of him? He hasn't——"

It suddenly flashed into her mind that, ruined and disgraced, he had killed himself.

"He hasn't done himself any——"

"Certainly not, but at the close of the Coffee Exchange to-day—he had been carrying on a big deal, you know——"

Ah, too well she knew it!

"He collapsed, and——"

"Where is he?"

"They are bringing him home. The doctor says it was the nervous strain of the last two months which has culminated in this breakdown. It is nothing serious, I beg to assure you. He will be all right, with rest and freedom from care and anxiety."

Rest he could get, thought the woman, but freedom from care and anxiety—never! Stop! Where could he get rest? They would be poor, have nothing. Bertie had said every dollar was gone unless the corner could be broken. Perhaps—but Smith-Pogis was speaking again.

"You know, of course, that corner——"

"I know all about it, Mr. Smith-Pogis. Bertie told me to-day. I believe we have lost everything, but my courage——"

"Lost! By Jove, no! You've won."

"What!" cried the woman. The man was certainly mad.

"You've won, I say. Really, you know. What do you call it? Busted the corner, cleaned up everything in

the last two hours. There has never been such a scene on the Coffee Exchange. Everybody went crazy. Just when they thought the corner was made the break came. Nobody knew how or why. The fellows on the other side, the bears, you know, took advantage of it, and everything went whirling down. You stand to win millions, Miss Livingstone. I congratulate you, don't you know."

"How did you know I was in it?"

"Bertie told me."

"Did he tell you anything else?" asked Miss Livingstone, swiftly.

The Englishman hesitated. He was loath to lie. He wasn't used to it. When he did he did it clumsily.

"Stop!" cried the woman, her face scarlet with shame, quickly divining the truth. "I see you know."

He could only bow and wish he could sink through the floor in the face of her accusing gaze.

"Did you tell any one?"

"Only one man."

"And why him?"

"I had to. I——"

"Who was it?"

"I promised not to tell."

"I suppose it will soon be public property," returned Miss Livingstone, with a bitter sigh.

"No. That man won't tell, I'm sure."

"Mr. Smith-Pogis, how was that corner broken?"

He tried another lie, like the gentleman he was, and failed again.

"I know," she cried, interrupting him. "You broke it yourself. You were on the other side, I remember—a bull. You threw your holdings in the market. Oh, Mr. Smith-Pogis——"

"No, I held on," said that youngster; "I didn't—ah—quit the—er—game, you know. Not such a cad, by Jove!"

"How much did you lose?"

"Oh, come now, really——"

"I insist upon knowing."

"Well, I—I haven't figured it up yet. I suppose I lost pretty much all I had in. It wasn't much. The governor can stand it. He's got

plenty, you know. I did sell after a while."

"What did you do it for?"

"I—I—for—I wanted to get as much back as I could, you know, when I saw the market going down, and——"

"Mr. Smith-Pogis, you have told three of the most lovely and honorable lies I ever listened to. I know why you sold just when things were coming your way. Did you do it for Bertie and me?"

"Not for Bertie," he whispered.

The woman took his hand.

"You are a brave and noble gentleman," she said. "I wish I could give you the answer you deserve to your question, but I am afraid I cannot. I am ashamed. I treated your wooing as a jest, and now I am punished."

"Don't, Miss Livingstone," said the young man. "I'm proud to have known you, happy to be permitted to be your friend. Of course, I'm dreadfully cut up, and all that, you know, but I knew how it would be. I'm a duffer in everything——"

"Except in being one of the truest, noblest gentlemen I ever knew," answered the woman.

"But there is another——" began the Honorable Reginald, excitedly, and then, remembering his promise given that morning, he stopped.

"Yes, yes, go on! One other who——"

"I can't, really, don't you know. I'd like to tell, but——"

"One question, Mr. Smith-Pogis. Mr. Tillotson was on your side, too?"

The Englishman opened wide his eyes in astonishment.

"You needn't say anything about it. I learned this from Bertie myself. What I want to know is, does he know about Bertie?"

"Really, Miss Livingstone——"

"That is enough. Did you tell him?"

The Englishman was in agony. He stared at her, speechless, cudgeling his brain to get some answer that would serve the purpose.

"Did he break that corner?" went

on the woman, relentlessly. "As you did, for me? It was his corner, was it not? Ah, I know. Do not tell another untruth, Mr. Smith-Pogis."

There was a noise in the street; any diversion was welcome.

"Here is the carriage with Bertie," he cried, rushing to the window, happy at being permitted to escape.

"Connie," said her brother, weakly, as he was assisted up the steps into the hall, "it's all right. We busted the corner. That damned—hound—Tillottson—is ruined. Your secur—ities—safe. We've doubled all we—had—I don't know—the profits."

He sank down in the great chair in the hall, and leaned against the table. He was still weak from the dreadful battle he had waged, the terrible struggle he had undergone, and he spoke brokenly, scarcely master of himself.

"What! you here, Smith-Pogis?" he rambled on, observing for the first time. "You were in the wreck—on the other side—cleaned out. Why didn't—you follow—my lead?"

Smith-Pogis bit his lip to keep from curling it in contempt before Miss Livingstone, and turned away.

"You must be put to bed, Bertie, dear, at once," said his sister, intervening to check a scene which was both horrible and painful at the same time.

Later in the evening she had another caller.

"There is a man down-stairs, Miss Livingstone," said the footman. "He says his name is Johnstone, and he wants to see you."

"I know no one named Johnstone," answered Miss Livingstone, wearily. She had been so tried by the events of the day that she felt unequal to seeing anybody, unless it were a positive necessity. "Ask him his business."

"He says he comes from Mr. Tillottson, miss," said the man, returning after a further interview with Johnstone.

"What sort of a person is he?"

"Very common-looking, miss, but masterful," answered the servant.

"Take him into the library. Tell him I'll see him at once."

"Gee whillikens!" exclaimed old Johnstone, as Miss Livingstone swept into the room. "Excuse an old man, ma'am, but you're suttainly wuth it!"

His words were strange, his manner more so, but there beamed such a kindly, intelligent look in his eyes that the woman took no offense. She realized that he was probably one of Tillottson's former companions, and that he meant well.

"I am glad you are pleased, sir," she said, smiling faintly. "The compliment is sincere, if direct."

"You bet your life it is, ma'am," said Johnstone. "Well, ma'am, our coffee corner is busted."

"I know. I learned it some time ago."

"My pardner is ruined."

"Did he send you to tell me that?"

"Now, Miss Livingstone, that's a low-down deal—you'll excuse me. You don't know Ed Tillottson like me, or you'd know that he ain't never the kind to squeal when a deal goes agin him."

"I am ashamed," said the woman; "I should have known."

"Him and me have been pardners for nigh on twenty years, and I'm plumb certain that if he knowed I was here a-tellin' you what I am he'd shoot me in a minute. He would, sure. No, sirree—ma'am, I mean—Tillottson reckons to pull his freight fer Brazil day after to-morrow. He's plumb cleaned out. He played the hand fer all it was wuth, and lost. And he's game, all right. He ain't sayin' nuthin'. But that man's hard hit, he is."

"Why do you tell me this, Mr. Johnstone?"

"Because he's in love with you, ma'am. He ain't goin' to tell you hisself——"

"Isn't he coming to see me?"

"He said no, but he'd write to you."

"Write! But he has a decision to get, to-morrow."

"I reckon he thinks he's got it, all right. No, ma'am, Ed takes his medicine like a man. I jest thought you'd ought to know about it."

"I do know."

"But you don't know everything."

"I do."

"Did that English maverick tell you?"

"He did not."

"I didn't think he would. I knowed he was a gent, all right, if he is sech an ass. Who did tell you?"

"Nobody."

"Well, what do you know, and how do you know it, then?"

"I have not known Mr. Tillottson for twenty years, as you have, Mr. Johnstone, but I have found out enough about him in my short acquaintance to know what he would do. He learned in some way that my fortune was involved in this coffee deal—I hope he does not believe it was with my consent?"

"He knows all about that, miss."

"Do you know it?"

"In course, bein' in the deal; but nobody else, 'ceptin' me and him and the Englishman'll ever know about it."

The proud woman turned away her head in a sudden access of shame. Her brother's embezzlement seemed to be common property in truth, now.

"Were you in the deal, too?" she asked, at last.

"I'm in all Ed's deals, and he's in mine. I was reckonin' to be his best man at this yere weddin'; if it took place, I mean."

"How much money did Mr. Tillottson have in this corner?"

"Every rap. But that's all right."

"And you?"

"The same. Don't mind about me. I never did have so much fun as I had yesterday, in fact, all this month. It's Ed I'm thinkin' about."

"Why do you call him 'Ed'?" asked the woman, curiously. "His name is Elijah."

"He didn't like that name, nor 'Draco,' neither. He signs his name 'E. D.,' so we allus calls him 'Ed.'"

"Mr. Tillottson broke that corner himself to save me?"

"Yes; he done jest that thing."

"And lost all his money?"

"Sure did."

"And you, too?"

"Yes; that's the size of it."

For one fleeting moment Miss Livingstone thought of reimbursing old Johnstone for his loss. One glance, however, at his face, warned her that the proposition would be considered an insult.

"Mr. Tillottson acted very nobly."

"He's in love with you."

"But you? You were not in love with me!"

"If I'd a-seen you before," answered the man, promptly, "I'd have been."

"Why did you sacrifice your fortune?"

"What's mine's Ed's, and what's Ed's mine, I reckon; 'ceptin' in wives—that is, if he gits one."

"Mr. Johnstone," said the woman, resolutely, "if he wants one, if he wants me—that is, he gets one."

"Gee whillikens!" whistled the old man, "that's the talk! I said when I come in you were wuth the game. But how are you goin' to fix things? That man Tillottson is the proudest man under the sun. Now that he has failed he'll never ask you agin."

"Won't he?" smiled Miss Livingstone at her aged interlocutor. "Will you send him up here?"

"You can't git him up here, I'm afeered."

"Shall I have to go for him?"

"I think if you was to write him a letter—tell him you was in great trouble, he'd come hisself. He'd do anythin' to help you."

"I know he would," said Miss Livingstone, softly. "Will you take a note if I write it?"

"Not me! He'd want to know where I got it, and what I was doin' up here. Just send it down by one of your peons—"

"One of my—oh, yes, I know. Where does he live?"

Johnstone gave her his address, and, having completed his errand thereby, rose to go.

"I wish," she said, giving him her hand, "there was something I could

do to show my appreciation of your kindness."

"Well, if you make Ed happy I'll be satisfied."

"You shall be best man at the wedding," she answered, smiling confidently, "if there is one."

XII

MISS LIVINGSTONE CORNERS MR. TILLOTTSON

THE first day of the new year dawned beautifully. The storm was over, and the air was clear, bracing and cold. Yet Tillottson got out of bed with a heavy heart. He had had a long, sleepless night to think over the situation, and the more he considered it the more miserable he became. He didn't repine over the loss of the money, either, but of the woman. Old Johnstone, who ought to have felt worse, for he had no love to sustain him, was unusually cheerful; so much so that his superabundant spirits jarred roughly on his companion's present mood, and he spoke sharply, to which the elder turned a deaf ear, only emitting a series of irritating chuckles.

"Happy New Year," he said, "and here's something for you, I'll bet," he added, as there was a knock on the door. "A letter! Female woman's writin' on it, too, if I can judge of the tender sex."

"Give it to me," cried Tillottson, with all the eagerness of a boy.

Johnstone held him off for a little space, while he pretended to examine it carefully.

"Johnstone," said Tillottson, impatiently, "I'm in no mood for trifling to-day. I'm that riled and nervous—"

"Here's your letter, sonny," said the other, handing it to him, "and much good may it do you."

Tillottson had never seen Miss Livingstone's handwriting, but he recognized the Livingstone arms, and he tore it open furiously.

"Miss Livingstone wants my assistance, Johnstone," he said. "Listen."

"Miss Livingstone is in great trouble," so he read, "and she begs Mr. Tillottson to come to her assistance as soon as he receives this. Miss Livingstone will be at home during the morning, and she will expect Mr. Tillottson immediately. He has proffered her his friendship and assistance, and she needs it greatly now."

"I'm going at once!" he cried.

"Better git some breakfast fust. You kin do your duty better on a full meal," said Johnstone, with a fine eye to the material things of life.

There had been no great bunch of American beauty roses sent to Miss Livingstone that morning. Tillottson was too poor to afford another bunch, it seemed. Nor was the usual box of Parma violets left at her door. She was fain to fall back upon the carnations of the faithful Honorable Reginald. The Honorable Reginald, she learned from a note enclosed, had suddenly sailed for England that morning. She had heard nothing whatever from Mr. Cutter. Indeed, only the failure of the violets caused her to remember the existence of the poor man.

If she had read the morning papers, however, she would have seen an account of his ruin and self-destruction. He had procured some cartridges for Tillottson's pistol, and had blown his brains out in his office that night, leaving a brief note in which he announced his defalcations and failure. The great corner had ruined Tillottson, it had beggared Bertie Livingstone of his honor, and it had brought Cutter to the grave of a suicide. There were hundreds of lesser operators who suffered in varying degrees, as well.

But if Miss Livingstone lacked flowers she was a blossom herself that morning. Passion and hope had given her back her youth. A color like that of a girl pulsed in her cheek. Her heart throbbed as a girl's might, expectant of a first love. None of that, however, did Mr. Tillottson realize

when she stood before him in the library.

"You sent for me, Miss Livingstone," he said, bowing profoundly.

He was irreproachably dressed, as usual, and his anxiety and regret, not for what he had done, but for what he was to lose, had added refining touches to his handsome face. He had lost some of his assurance, but had gained in other directions. As the conversation progressed, she noticed he spoke more slowly and with painstaking care. His mind was naturally a brilliant one, and he had spent the two months in the hardest kind of study under competent teachers, trying to perfect himself in grammar and in the other adornments of speech, adding refining touches to the solid learning and ability which were already his own. And it was rare indeed that he forgot himself. She was surprised to find him definitely improved, although such was the state of her regard for him that she would probably have arrived at the same conclusion if he had deteriorated since she had seen him.

"Mr. Tillottson—" she began, and then hesitated.

"You said you were in trouble, and wanted my help," he said, formally, although she noticed his hand was trembling like an aspen leaf under the restraint he strove to put upon himself. "I am afraid I can be of little assistance, but whatever I can do for you I am most anxious to do, Miss Livingstone."

"I know that, but—" She hesitated, again looking away. "You know what day this is, Mr. Tillottson?" she asked, softly, so softly, in fact, that he could scarcely hear her.

"The first of January," he replied, his voice quivering as he thought how he had looked forward to this day, and what it might have meant to him.

"You were to—ask—there was to be—a—decision."

"I cannot ask it now, Miss Livingstone. I set myself a task, and failed."

"What was your task?"

"That corner in coffee, you know."

"Oh!" she said, vaguely, "the corner in coffee?"

"Didn't you know about it, Miss Livingstone?" he said, looking directly at her.

"Yes, but——"

"No matter. I failed. That's all. Instead of ten millions I hoped to have to match your fortune, I have nothing. I can offer you nothing. There's nothing for me to do but thank God I met you, wish you good luck—and go."

"You forget, Mr. Tillottson, that I need your help."

"I shall be glad to help you, in any way, if you will tell me what to do. My feelings——"

"They haven't changed, Mr. Tillottson?"

"Yes, they have."

"What!" cried the woman, anxiously, leaning forward and looking at him with alarm and apprehension in her eyes, which, strive as she would, she could not suppress.

"It won't do you any harm to know, now that it is all over," he explained. "I loved you before; I worship you now. That's the change—the only change there will ever be in me. I shall love you more and more as long as I live. But all this is past, Miss Livingstone. It doesn't interest you now. We'll say no more about it. I've played to win, and lost, though no man ever had such a stake as mine before, and I want you to know that I'm a good loser. What is your trouble?"

"I am a most miserable and unhappy woman, and I—you say—you do not wish the answer to that—question?"

"Wish it, Miss Livingstone? I'm crazy to—no, no, you're right. There is no answer to be given."

"Well, then, since you don't require an answer——"

"What then?"

"And since there is nothing between us——"

"Nothing!"

"I'll tell you my trouble. You see— But I am afraid I can't ask you——"

"Miss Livingstone, how can I help you? Ask me anything."

"I think I will confide in you, then. Since you are sure you won't mind, and all is over between us."

She turned away, but he could see the color flooding her cheek.

"I am in love," she whispered, so softly that her words were scarcely audible to him.

"I suppose so," he muttered, under his breath. At the same time his hand stole to his heart, and he clenched his teeth.

"And the man I love loves me."

"Of course. Why don't you marry him, then?" he gasped out, at last.

"He doesn't want me to marry him; there is something between us."

"Good God, Miss Livingstone," he replied, "has he a wife? Have you given your affections to some black-guard? If so, I'll shoot him——"

"No, no!" cried the woman. "I wouldn't have a hair of his head harmed. He is——"

"What?"

"The truest, noblest gentleman I know. It isn't that that comes between us."

"What is it? Is it anything I can remove?" asked the little man, nerving himself for the next thing in this dreadful interview which was a thousand times harder to bear than the corner.

"It's money," she said.

"Oh, then I can't help you," regretfully.

"Haven't you any money?"

"Not a cent. Why didn't you speak to me yesterday?"

"It's my money that comes between us. He is poor, and he will not take it—even with me. If he'd only say the word, I could persuade him. But he won't speak—like you," she added, in the faintest of whispers.

"I wouldn't let money differences stand between you and your lover, Miss Livingstone. Speak to him yourself."

The strain upon Tillottson was dreadful. His whole body was quivering with anguish. How could any woman be so cruel to a man who loved her as did he, as to force him to listen to her pleading for another man's love? She wished his help. Well, she should have it, if it broke his heart.

"Go to him," he said, making a superhuman effort to control himself and speak calmly; "tell him the truth. It isn't conventional, I know. The woman has to wait for the man to propose, I believe. But I am an unconventional man. We people who live on the frontier usually are. If I were you, I'd go to him and tell him everything. There is nothing higher than love between man and woman, and money is a mere circumstance. What he had would be yours, and yours his."

"I am telling him, Mr. Tillottson."

"Miss Livingstone!"

"I am telling him," she whispered, flashing a glance at him that illuminated him like the sun bursting through the clouds on a Wintry morning.

"My God!" he cried, sinking back in the chair, staring at her, "do you mean me? It can't——"

"I love you, Mr. Tillottson. See——"

She rose, stood hesitant, poised before him, then sank to her knees, reaching out her hands to him.

"I love you," she whispered, bravely, her eyes swimming, her cheeks flaming. "Will you marry me? Will you take me, money and all?"

She leaned toward him. It was not in mortal man to resist, yet he strove to do so. He drew back.

"I can't," he murmured, hoarsely. "I can't."

But she would not be denied. Her head was on his breast now, and for the first time her lips met his own. His arm stole about her. He pressed her to his heart with all the passion in his soul. He kissed her again and again. He was mad, delirious, with the unexpected happiness of that moment. Had she conquered?

"I can't," he murmured, after a little pause.

"You can—you shall—the money is yours. Yesterday night I was a beggar but for you. I know everything. You broke your own corner for me, for me! You did this that my money might be saved. Would you break my heart now? Hush!" she cried, putting her hand on his lips, "not a word! I won't receive a dollar of this money unless you come with it! If there is no other way, I will come to you in the clothes in which I stand, and nothing else. Love is above money. You said so yourself. I loved you, I think, from the minute you first appeared. I am an old woman——"

He threw back his head and laughed.

"—but I feel in this instance as any other woman——"

"Say 'girl,' sweetheart."

"As any other girl might feel," she complied, "but I wasn't honest with myself. I fought against it in my heart. I wouldn't admit it until yesterday, when I learned my money was gone. Then I thought you would not come to me when you had lost your money. And I said I would not marry you if I lost mine. Now it is different. Do you know if you had come to me with your money, or without it, I could not have refused you? I cannot help loving you. Nothing, nothing, shall part us! Money is nothing. You have said it. Love is all!"

She flashed such a look at him through teary lashes that he pressed her to his breast again.

"Who told you?" he asked, at last. "It wasn't that Englishman, was it?"

"No."

"He's a gentleman."

"Yes."

"How did you learn it?"

"My heart told me first, then your friend, Mr. Johnstone."

"The old rascal! God bless him!"

"And so say I," added the woman, nestling against him. "But you have not accepted me. Will you take

me? See, I am on my knees begging you."

"I will, so help me God!"

"Money and all?"

"I suppose so. That goes with you, I guess, and I'll have to make the best of it—Constance."

"Elijah!" said the woman.

It was a homely, unromantic name. She had thought she could never get used to it, but as she spoke it bravely he thought it was the sweetest appellation that ever fell from a woman's lips.

To them entered impetuously old Johnstone, in spite of the frantic efforts of the appalled servant to prevent him. He had a telegram in his hand. His keen eye took in the agitated couple of fifty and thirty-five, and certainly, this time at least, neither of them looked their years. He saw the happiness radiating from Tillottson's face. He marked the color in Miss Livingstone's cheeks, the sparkle in her eyes. He was even keen enough to notice the tousled, tumbled hair—bewitching disorder that it was! He could tell what had been going on.

"Well, I see you've concluded to jine."

"You old reprobate!" said Tillottson; "what did you tell her for?"

"I thought I'd ought to. Ain't you obleeged to me?"

"I am. Still, you should not have done it."

"No; I s'pose not."

"I told you, Mr. Johnstone, that you could be best man at the——"

"At the jinin'? You bet your socks, I'll be! I reckoned on that ever sense I seed you yesterday mornin'."

"What have you there?" asked Tillottson.

"I've jest got a telegram from Lopez, and he says the mine is all right. They've struck good pay ore, their claims is located, and you kin capitalize her, if you want. You're a millionaire again."

"And you won't be poor?" said Miss Livingstone, in dismay. "You won't take my money?"

"Joe," said Tillottson, "I'll make it

over to you. I'll have enough here, with my wife, for any reasonable man. You can have my share of the deal."

"Well, I'm dumbed!" said old Johnstone. "I'll give it to your bride, Ed, for a weddin' present."

"I won't take it," cried Miss Livingstone. "I have my own fortune and—Elijah—and that's enough."

"Elijah!" exclaimed Johnstone, growing very red in the face and then

bursting into hearty laughter, in which the other two joined.

It is of record that Miss De Kaater relented sufficiently to go to the wedding, after all; especially when she learned it was inevitable, and after she was told how chivalrously Tillottson had behaved. Mr. Johnstone, too, was much impressed with her dignified and patrician air, and they do say—but that would be impossible, surely!



DREAMS AT MIDNIGHT

DREAMS at midnight! . . . Ah, my sweet,
 Sometimes, i' the night's heart, I
 Catch the transitory beat
 Of a dream that wingeth by,
 Wrought of gold that seemeth spun
 (As your hair is) from the sun;
 Wrought of flowers, their glow, their grace;
 (As your face is—ah, your face!)
 Be my dreams, then, still of you,
 For 'tis midnight dreams come true!

Dreams at midnight! . . . Dearest heart,
 In the moon's mid-watches, I
 Sometimes out of slumber start,
 As a dream goes fleeting by,
 Fashioned from caresses such
 As I know are in your touch;
 Holding all the perfect bliss
 Of your yet unmemoried kiss.
 Be my dreams, then, still of you,
 For 'tis midnight dreams come true!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



HER ONLY CHANCE

ELSIE—Must I learn to swim, mama?

MRS. DIMPLETON—Yes, my dear; for, when you are older, you will have to wear your bathing suit without ever going into the water.



THE ring on a woman's finger is the badge of slavery—of him who put it there.

BALLAD OF THE DEEP WHITE WOOD

By Zona Gale

THERE is no spot in the deep white wood
Where the eye can meet the blue;
No sunshine falls on the pallid leaves
Or drinks the waiting dew;
Only the moonbeams, thin as light,
May flicker and filter through.

The white wood lies in the king's domain,
But seldom the king walks there;
And seldom a silver wing beats by
In the zephyrless halls of air;
It is as a temple, taperless,
Where the gray nuns kneel in prayer.

Now forth when the evening wooed the world
With a thousand wiles to sleep
Came fleetly from out her father's cot,
Under the white berg's steep,
A girl with her dream-dim eyes turned toward
The path to the white wood's deep.

What marvel that Clovis, little maid
O' dreams, should have longed to leave
The meads and marshes she knew full well,
And enter the wood to weave
Her wind-wild fancies and wave-wild hopes
Where the windless branches grieve?

Oh, long like years were the lonely days
She had waited in the fold
Of the hearts that loved her better far
Than the loving lips had told.
Yet was she sure of a faint, strange thing
Astir, like May in the mold;

A faint, strange thing that went thrilling through
Her blood, till it laved her heart;
Fragrance and wonder and fear it was,
And it made her pulses start
At odor of leaves and beat of hoofs,
And she longed to walk apart.

THE SMART SET

Oh, sweet and wild did the world grow then,
And delicate summons bring;
Tender she grew of the little bird
That came to her sill to sing;
Once, when her hand touched its breast, she wept
With thrill and with questioning.

At length, the bliss was too great to bear,
And so, when the gloaming fell,
She left her home by the white berg's steep
And the two who loved her well,
And wandered into the wild white wood,
At call of a faëry bell.

Into the copse, all pallor of leaf,
And breathing of secret bird,
Went Clovis; no shadow etched the moss,
And no ghostly blossom stirred.
Only the moonlight began to flow,
As if at a secret word.

Silvered and shadowed, and still there stretched
Through the wan, wet moss a way
That wound to a thicket wonderful
With petals and webs and play
Of eerie, opiate moonbeam nets
That lighted the glade like day.

There waited Clovis, the maid o' dreams,
And pale, oh, pale, was she
As light kissed faint by the shade of stars
That falls from the dream-leaf tree,
And beautiful as the gods will let
A mortal maiden be.

The young king rose from his arras couch,
And looked on the moon-swept green;
"Now, lo!" thought he, "but here lies a world
That they say is my demesne,
And yet 'tis a wild, white land to-night,
A land I have never seen.

"Magic there is in the wistful wind
That stirs on the ivied wall;
The deodar and the tamarind
Are sorcerers, one and all;
And some strange alchemy has touched
The tower where the gray vines fall."

Softly the young king trod the stair,
Close-muffled in velvet hood;
Softly he opened a secret gate
Where a sleeping sentry stood;
Breathlessly forth on the quest went he,
Into the wild white wood.

As stirs a rose when a nightingale
 Wakes near on a tranced night,
 As the soul of the rose is thrilling
 Ere the lavish notes take flight
 In song, so the maid o' dreams knew well
 How near was her delight.

She turned and looked in the young king's eyes;
 And, as when she touched the bird,
 The joy and the pain were in her heart,
 But her sweet lips spoke no word.
 Only far and faint and wild
 Came a summons the two hearts heard.

For souls long dead in the deep white wood
 Awoke and were fain of speech,
 And smote the breasts of the living two
 And answered, each unto each.
 The dead love dead in the hearts of those
 Who list what the dead can teach!

And souls unborn filled the air like wind,
 And trembled and beat their wings,
 And yearned for the life they had not found,
 For the love that living brings;
 They pleaded loud in the wild white wood,
 And they sobbed like wounded things.

The young king bent till his silver plume
 Lay light on the maid's fair hair;
 And, "O maid o' dreams!" he breathed, as one
 Who speaks and is not aware.
 Then close to her mouth's fresh red he stooped,
 And he laid his own lips there.

"O maid o' dreams!" he murmured, and she,
 Her soul in her eyes, said naught;
 But heaven and new-found earth and pain
 Of them both were in her thought;
 And the two stood mute, and time stood still
 With the marvel it had wrought.

Where was the voice of the wild white wood,
 And had it no word to say?
 Where was the voice of the dead who know,
 And whose will the quick obey?
 Could it not bid them go and be glad,
 And to walk in peace away?

Alas! their curse is their speechlessness
 Who, knowing it all, must lie
 And watch the living miss all their joy
 And, missing it, wait to die.
 So watched they the two in the wood that night
 Pass all their wonder by.

THE SMART SET

The young king thought her a maid o' dreams
 By his longing fancy sown;
 He heard the summons and knew it not
 From the sound of flowers, wind-blown.
 And she—how could she know 'twas the king
 Who walked in the wood alone?

So each on the wan moss moved away,
 And each looked back and sighed.
 For oh, but that path is hard to take,
 And oh, but the world is wide!
 And because each kept the soul of each,
 It was as they two had died.

Then out of the charmed world went they,
 Back to the world they knew—
 He to his throne and she to her cot,
 For they dreamed the dream was through.
 And each did the needless things of life,
 That the needless people do.

And all life long till the king was old,
 And the hair of the maid was white,
 Neither knew that the bread and the wine
 Had waited the altar light;
 And neither knew that the sacrament
 Was spread for them both that night.

For oh, though the path is hard to take,
 And the way is barren, too,
 We miss the bread and we spill the wine,
 And we fear lest dreams come true;
 And we live the needless days of life
 As the needless people do!



INEVITABLE

FIRST WIDOW—I don't think I shall announce my engagement until next week.

SECOND WIDOW—Why the delay?
 "Well, he hasn't proposed yet."



TEMPUS FUGIT

HE—Be candid, and tell me when you want me to go.
 SHE—It's a couple of hours too late for that.

A VISIT IN BLACK AND WHITE

By Elizabeth Duer

THE brakeman called "Oceantown," and the parlor-car porter echoed it while I gathered up my belongings and bade a kindly farewell to the friends under whose escort I had made my eighty-mile journey from town. They were going further down the line, and I was stopping to visit my friend, Mrs. Wilder, in her cottage by the sea.

"There is Mrs. Wilder's carriage!" I cried, full of excitement, as I hurried from the car. "She has sent to meet me, so I am all right and you can dismiss me from your mind."

They smiled and called good-bye, and I stood exchanging last words by the open window of the car until the train was once more in motion.

Mrs. Wilder's groom approached me with a letter.

"You are Miss Willoughby, I think, ma'am?" he asked, glancing from the letter to me.

I took the letter addressed in Kate Wilder's familiar hand, and tore it open as I walked toward the carriage, supposing some errand was to be done on our homeward drive; but I had hardly read the first page before I was ready to sink on the station floor with worry and disgust.

Mrs. Wilder's children, who had been ailing for a few days, had developed scarlet fever, and knowing I had never had the disease, she wrote to beg me not to come to the house. Her carriage was waiting to take me to the club, where I could stay for the night until I could communicate with my friends, and she hoped I would forgive her for not having let me know before, but she herself had known only an hour ago.

I am sure I am not more helpless than most girls of twenty, but I had led what is called a sheltered life—a life where my elders did the thinking and I did the enjoying—and to find myself alone on a station platform at seven o'clock on an August evening, when the days were visibly shortening, and no other refuge except a gay clubhouse where I should have to remain unchaperoned, was appalling to my inexperience.

Our town house was closed and wired against burglars; mama was abroad; papa had gone off on a yacht that very day; the servants were at the Tuxedo house, getting it ready for our return there in September. I felt utterly deserted. If only I had read Kate's letter before the train started, I might have gone on with my friends!

One way of escape seemed open to me. I was due the following week at Tidecrest, a fashionable settlement about ten miles further down the coast than Oceantown. I might go on there to-night, and cast myself on the mercy of Bessie Carrington. After all, it was only five days in advance of my invitation.

Our own Tuxedo hospitality was very lavish, so perhaps I did not properly appreciate how inconvenient an unexpected guest might prove in the smaller accommodations of a seaside villa. I turned to the station-master.

"Is there a train to-night to Tidecrest?"

He shook his head, but suggested that I might drive.

"You just hire Sam Bolter's carriage, and you'll be to Tidecrest 'most as soon as the train 'ud take yer. He won't overcharge you, nuther, though

it's a good twelve miles and sort o' late to be traveling. Why, you'd never get there with that team of Mis' Wilder's. City horses ain't used to bein' driv through sand."

I hastened to close a five-dollar bargain with Sam Bolter—dirt cheap, the station-master said it was—and then I scratched a line of explanation to Kate Wilder, sent away her smart victoria, and packed myself and one small trunk into the vehicle called a "ker-ridge," leaving my heavier luggage to follow by train the next day.

The sun was going down in golden glory as we started, and the evening air was peculiarly agreeable after the heat and dust of the train. Sometimes the road commanded a view of the ocean stretching purple and somber away to the south, and sometimes we drove through marshes thick with bushes and mosquitos, the latter keeping the tails of the horses as busy as they kept my hands, and making me envy Sam Bolter's thick-skinned indifference. Once a dear little furry animal—black and white—ran across the road, and when I asked Sam Bolter to stop to let me look at it, he only lashed his horses and said we "wuz durned lucky not to see him with our noses," and to this day I have never been able to imagine what he meant, and I always forget to ask.

It was nearly nine o'clock when we arrived at Tidecrest, and the moon was coming up over the sea.

A long street ran at right angles to the ocean, lined with villas on each side and terminating at the low sand-hills that characterize the Long Island coast.

Bessie Carrington's cottage was the very last on the left side of the street, and her piazzas overlooked the ocean. The cottage was large and irregular, and it seemed to me impossible that all its bedrooms should be occupied.

The drawing-room was in the front of the house, and through its open windows I could see Mrs. Carrington and two other ladies, each deep in a pile of letters—evidently it was mail time. The white evening dresses of the wo-

men and the glow of the lamps under the silk shades of pale yellow made a pretty picture of luxury and comfort to the lonely wayfarer on the wrong side of the house.

The servant who answered the bell had to admit that Mrs. Carrington was at home, for indeed she was plainly to be seen, and my voice must have reached her, for she laid aside her letter, listened for a moment, and then came hurrying out to meet me.

"Why, Bee!" she exclaimed. "Where did you drop from?"

The tone was kind, but had a note of suppressed anxiety. In the complexities of modern life the element of surprise is effective almost everywhere except with one's hostess, but this is the wisdom of bitter experience acquired later.

I began a voluble explanation, and wound up with the appeal: "So, you see, Bessie, I had no alternative but to ask you to take me in."

She kissed me without fervor.

"Of course," she answered, "I will take you in, but I cannot make you very comfortable. I have two women staying with me, and they have the two spare rooms on the second floor; the only place I can put you is in the bachelors' quarters just across the hall."

She was a trifle querulous, but I was too much relieved to be offended.

"I know I am not due here till next week," I said, gaily, "but if you will only take me in, I will sleep in the dog-kennel. Why shouldn't I be lodged in the bachelors' quarters—I presume there is no bachelor lurking!"

She smiled.

"No," she said, "Jim Gillespie went off this afternoon. He drove across the Island to Peconic to join his friend Thompson's yacht, and he is not coming back, but the room is full of his things which my servants are to pack and send on to Newport tomorrow. You will have to take the room as you find it."

She turned to the servant, and I heard an order about making up the bed, etc., and for sandwiches and

sherry to be brought, and I took the opportunity to hurry back to the door, pay Sam Bolter, and let him carry in my little trunk. I was so glad to be with Bessie that I didn't care how cross she was. After all, the irritability of the well-bred is only a poor, negative affair—the absence of great cordiality or a slight gravity of expression. I was keen enough to feel her mood, but it did not depress me.

It was after nine o'clock, and I was simply starving. The sandwiches seemed to me food for the gods, and, scorning the sherry, I begged for milk, and drank several large glasses with thirsty enjoyment.

The two guests I barely knew, and, moreover, they were people mama particularly disliked. She has often declared that most of the gossip in New York could be traced to the untruthful malice of Mrs. Chalmers, the elder lady, and that Nina Weston, the younger, was only Mrs. Chalmers's understudy.

As I joined the group in the drawing-room, Mrs. Chalmers put down the *Tidecrest Gazette*, and, after giving me a supercilious bow, remarked to Bessie that the robbery at the Casino was still a mystery.

Miss Weston said that such things were always done by somebody in the neighborhood, and it was absurd to bring down detectives from town to look for village thieves.

Mrs. Carrington said she showed complete ignorance of the Long Island character; that no villager ever stole a pin's worth except by making their bills twice as large as they ought to be, and that the thieves might be town servants in any of the cottages, or tramps, but she knew all the villagers and would go bail for their respectability.

The subject under discussion gave me a vague sense of discomfort, in view of my isolated quarters, and I could have hugged Bessie for her endorsement of Long Island probity—it seemed to confine knavery to a semi-public place like the Casino, where many foreign servants were employed.

The clock struck ten. Mrs. Chalmers suppressed a yawn, and, picking up her pile of letters, walked toward the door, remarking that she had some correspondence to attend to, and preferred writing in her own room.

"I must let Gilbert know I am returning next week—a wise woman doesn't take her husband by surprise. Good night, Miss Willoughby!"

"A conjugal application of the golden rule?" I asked, spitefully, for I knew her remark was aimed against my unexpected advent.

"Wait, dear Mrs. Chalmers; I am going up, too," echoed Miss Weston. "I am sure Miss Willoughby must be tired."

"Don't leave your window unlatched," Mrs. Chalmers added, addressing me from the door. "If you are not afraid of burglars yourself, remember the rest of us are."

My hostess flushed with annoyance.

"There is no danger," she said, when we were alone, "but if you are in the least afraid, my maid can sleep on the sofa in your room. Jessie Chalmers always knows more disagreeable gossip than the newspapers themselves."

I declared I was not in the least afraid, and didn't want her maid, and yet down in my heart I was beginning to feel a little lonely and sad, and to wish Bessie would pet me as she usually did, and that those disagreeable women had gone home. Evidently I had disturbed the harmony of the party, or it could not have broken up at ten o'clock.

After this, Bessie was more like her old self, and we sat talking for half an hour. Then she took me to my room, or, more properly, rooms, for I was the proud possessor of two—a large bedroom in the wing of the house toward the ocean, with an inner room attached, fitted out most luxuriously as a dressing-room. This latter was entirely done in white tiles, and while it was only aired by a skylight and one small window set nearly at the ceiling, it was peculiarly pure and fresh.

A lamp was burning in the bed-

room, and Bessie lighted the candles in the dressing-room and looked about with the interest of a housewife.

"I declare," she said, "the servants have managed to pack Mr. Gillespie's things, after all—I was afraid they would be scattered everywhere in drawers and closets. You don't mind his trunk in the dressing-room, I'm sure."

My own trunk was in the bedroom, and I was already on my knees before it—I suppose, in the stress of packing for Mr. Gillespie, Bessie's people had not seen fit to ask for my key. The oversight did not distress my hostess. She stood in the middle of the room, contemplating the furniture.

The bed was covered by a mosquito-net whose umbrella-like top hung from a hook in the ceiling, and, in order to suit this hook, which had been placed in accordance with an arbitrary fancy on the part of the village carpenter, there was a space of about two feet between the side of the bed and the wall.

"I didn't know you had mosquitos," I remarked, naïvely, though I might have remembered the swarms we passed through on our drive from Oceantown.

"We haven't," said Bessie, fiercely. "I have nets because the flies on Long Island are so persistent and so bold."

She kissed me good night, and I really think she was pleased to have me with her, now that the first shock of getting a room ready at nine o'clock was over. At the door, she paused and glanced at the window, which was open, as far as the sash was concerned, but barred by close wooden shutters.

"I am afraid you will find this room warm on account of those shutters, but you must not open them, Bee, for they give on the piazza, and any one—I mean anything—could get in!"

"Cats?" I asked.

"I'm awfully afraid of cats," said Bessie, shutting the door.

All this talk of—cats made me nervous, and I took out only my things

for the night, and then put my valuables in a secret compartment, and locked the trunk, putting the key under my pillow.

Bessie lodged her bachelors like princes. There was every contrivance the modern Sybarite could require for being clean and comfortable in the glistening purity of that tiled dressing-room. I took a tepid shower after doing a bit of exercising with the punch-bag, and then, feeling much refreshed, I blew out all the lights, and got into bed.

A good conscience and cool sheets are excellent sedatives, and I was soon in a sound sleep, which I enjoyed for an hour or so, when the buzz of a mosquito roused me to fury. Why hadn't Bessie told me the truth? Then I should have pinned my net in a way to defy invasion.

Getting up, I lighted a candle, and put it on the table beside the bed, pinned the opening of the net carefully together, tucked it in all around except in one small place reserved for my own entrance, and then I went to the dressing-room, and selected a fine damask towel. By thoroughly wetting a towel, provided it is flexible, you have a perfect mosquito exterminator. I wrung out the towel and, returning to the bed, I stood up and slapped cunningly at my tormentors. The springs of the bed made an uncertain footing, and I lunged and swayed and frequently lost my balance, but before long the net was free from things living, except only me.

Oh, how hot it was! I was wide awake and almost tempted to take another shower. Certainly nets make the air about a bed very confined. I got out, dropped my towel on the floor, and blew out the candle, and then, instead of crawling back under my canopy, a wild desire possessed me to get a breath of sea air. I wasn't afraid. The hall clock struck one—it was the second time it had struck the single bell since I had been contending with the mosquitos, so I knew it was either one or half-past, though I had forgotten to look at my watch.

I groped my way to the window and, undoing the strong hasp, I pushed the shutters back against the side of the house. They settled into place with a gentle click. Outside, the world was bathed in moonlight. The surf broke in long, low lines with a gentle swish, and the sandy beach glistened as if diamond powder had been shaken over it with a lavish hand. It was so profoundly peaceful that I could not tear myself away. All sorts of moonlight poems floated through my mind—poems in music and poems in verse, and I began repeating to myself the scene from the “Siege of Corinth”:

’Tis midnight: on the mountains brown
The cold round moon shines deeply down;
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light
So wildly, spiritually bright.

“What nonsense,” I reflected, “to imagine stars ‘wildly, spiritually bright’ on a moonlight night! Why, I can hardly see a star at all; they are lost in the broad-faced shining of the moon.”

A breaker heavier than usual broke with a hollow sound, a puff of cold breeze lifted the tendrils of hair on my forehead, and my light attire of muslin, lace and ribbons could not protect me from a little shiver. The night was growing a bit eerie.

I put out my hand to draw in the shutter, and found it resisted; some patent catch held it fast and utterly defied my intelligence, which had never developed in the mechanical line. It was too silly to be worsted by a contrivance that a chambermaid could master, and once more I leaned out and was passing my hand around the bottom of the shutter—when the sound of stealthy footsteps caught my ear. They sounded close to the angle of the piazza. In a second, I should be seen, and I made a dash for the door, but too late, for half-way across the room the partial obscuring of the moonlight showed me the figure had reached the window. The agony was to know whether he had seen me—I was close against the white net of

the bed, and my last hope was to hide between it and the wall. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw he was getting into the window sideways and—thank heaven!—with his back toward the bed. A few noiseless steps brought me to my covert, and I crouched near the floor, fearing to let my head appear above the bed, in spite of the intervening veil of mosquito-net.

He paused for a moment near the window, for I could see his feet, and then he came straight toward the table by the bed, and passed his hands over everything. My heart beat so I thought I should suffocate—surely he must hear it—but he didn’t, apparently, for he then walked to the mantelpiece, and I heard him fumbling there. Such terror as I lived through in those few minutes leaves its stamp for life. I do not mean that it physically affected me afterward, but it left me less able to call suddenly upon my courage; to be hiding from danger has a worse effect upon the nerves than to be facing it.

To make the situation clear, I should mention that the window of the room was toward the south, overlooking the ocean; the bed was on the west side, and the north was mainly taken up by a chimney-place and a door leading into the hall; the east side opened into the dressing-room, and consequently the bed was in full view of that inner room if the communicating door was not closed.

At the mantelpiece the burglar gave a kind of grunt of satisfaction, and struck a match. Shielding it in the hollow of his hand, he came back to the table by the bed, and lighted the candle I had left. His boldness amazed me. I had raised my head when he went across the room, but I ducked it again when he came back with the match. His next move was to go into the dressing-room, get a second candle, light it at the one already burning, and carry it back.

Once more I ventured to raise my head, and saw the dreaded burglar was a gentleman! Jim Gillespie, I felt sure, who had mistrusted with his

yacht and come back to try for a night's lodgings in his old quarters—if he could get in—or else in the piazza hammock.

I wanted to laugh, so great was the relief, and I wanted to cry because the relief was so sudden, and then I became agonized by my own compromising situation—shut up with a young man in a bedroom at one o'clock.

What did I know of Jim Gillespie, that I should put my reputation in his power? There are gentlemen and gentlemen. With some, indeed, honor seals the lips; while with others, a secret is whispered and confided and boasted and twaddled about till it becomes town talk.

An older woman might have announced herself frankly, and asked the man's help in solving the situation, but I was inexperienced, and the mere fact of my dishabille weighed greatly upon my sensibilities. I resolved to wait until Mr. Gillespie was asleep and then make my way to Bessie's room, though I had no more idea how to find it than a blind mole.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Gillespie kept dashing from one room to the other, so that I was afraid to move; but while he was setting his bath going, I managed to smooth the bed to some semblance of being newly-made, and to creep under it instead of crouching by the wall.

I never knew such rapid preparations as his; it wasn't ten minutes from the time he entered until he had taken his bath, and made himself ready for bed. He must have opened his trunk, too, for, as he came into the large room, I could see that he had on the most beautiful pajamas of blue silk.

My idea of him had been rather indistinct, owing to the frightened peeps I had ventured to take; but from under the bed, I looked more boldly as he crossed the room with a candle in his hand. He was of medium height, well set up, a nice curly head and short features.

He came to the bed, examined the pins in the net with some surprise, took them out, pricked his fingers,

swore, and popped in. He then blew out both candles with a waste of breath that would have extinguished a torch.

Every minute the absurdity of our relative positions overcame me, and a fit of giggles would only be suppressed by forcing myself to remember the impropriety of the whole thing and to realize the danger from Mrs. Chalmers's tongue should the episode ever become known.

The bed creaked a good deal—perhaps Mr. Gillespie was heavier than I supposed, and he twisted and turned a dozen times before he settled. Finally, he gave a sigh, and I felt sure that in a moment he would be asleep; but no—he began slapping at the mosquitos.

I felt like calling out, "Silly Billy, to take the pins out of the net!" but, naturally, I had to enjoy my taunts in imagination.

At last, however, fatigue got the better even of mosquitos, and my gentleman slept—a nice, peaceful, boyish sleep, with sometimes a deeper breath than usual, but no restless movement—and I knew the time for action on my part had come.

I wriggled from under the bed, and stood for a moment looking down at my visitor. The moonlight was still bright, but owing to the thickness of the net I could not see his features very distinctly. He was lying on his back, with one hand thrust under the bolster—I sleep without a pillow myself, and he seemed content with my arrangements—and the other flung out, palm up, the fingers slightly curled. The attitude was that of a child, and my heart warmed to him. The motherly enters largely into the affections of women.

It occurred to me that, before escaping, I should do well to get my clothes, which I had folded neatly and put in the wardrobe of the dressing-room.

Mr. Gillespie slept so profoundly that my courage in moving about almost reached temerity. I did not waste time, but neither did I hurry, and I collected my clothes in the inner room, even to my hair-pins, and, spreading my dressing-gown on the tiled floor, I

popped everything into it, and made it into a roll. Then I tiptoed back, to be sure all was safe before unlocking the door into the main hall—but alas for the plans of men and mice!

As I stepped into the bedroom, I nearly screamed, for once more the window framed a man's figure, and this time it was a huge negro. I had just strength to step back behind the jamb of the door, and there I stood quaking till I should see what the newcomer meant to do; and again my tell-tale heart began thumping like a sledge-hammer.

The man came into the room, walked straight to the bed—as Jim Gillespie had done before him—listened, seemed satisfied, picked up a watch and chain from the table, and then crossed the room toward the dressing-room.

I sank to my knees, for I was nearer to fainting than I had ever been in my healthy life, and I tried to scream, but no sound would come. It was fortunate that I did not make an outcry, for the negro's point of interest was not the inner room, but my trunk, which stood against the same east wall, only further along. I could hear him picking the lock, but could not see him, for the door where I was hiding opened out into the bedroom, and made a screen between him and me.

A kind of fury seized me when I thought of that black wretch helping himself to all my treasured belongings, and a wicked desire came into my mind to wake Jim Gillespie. It was only the dread of bloodshed that restrained me.

Suddenly, the lock of my trunk yielded with a crack that surprised the burglar almost as much as it did me, for he started to his feet and looked toward the bed, and none too soon, for Jim Gillespie was out with a bound, and threw himself on the intruder.

In my excitement, I came step by step into the room, unperceived by the interlocked figures, who gyrated and twisted and strained till I thought they must fall from exhaustion. Though much the lighter weight, Mr. Gillespie seemed to be getting the best of it,

when I saw the negro put his hand in his hip-pocket, and draw out something that flashed in the moonlight.

"Look out!" I screamed. "He has got a knife!"

At this voice from the unknown both wrestlers paused, and Jim Gillespie had the wit to seize the advantage. With his right hand, he grasped the negro's right wrist—the hand that held the razor—while he pressed his left forearm against the man's throat, and by a quick movement he bent the arm backward and upward to the shoulder-blades. The pain was exquisite, and the razor fell to the floor. With a spring I secured it, and, as I did so, my foot touched the towel I had used earlier against the mosquitos.

"Push him into the dressing-room," I gasped; and as I spoke I flung the damp towel over his woolly head.

Mr. Gillespie marched him across the room as easily as if he had a pistol at his head—indeed, the grasp on that bent arm must have been fearful suffering.

I ran to the door, which opened toward us.

"See whether the key is on this side," said Mr. Gillespie, as calmly as if my presence were quite in order.

I reported the key on our side.

"In you go!" said Jim, with a parting shove, and I banged the door and locked it.

We looked at each other.

"You did that awfully well." I remarked.

"It's a trick," he said, "but it works well, sometimes. It is called a back hammerlock."

"Is it, indeed!" I said, amused at his technicalities under circumstances, to say the least, unusual.

"By the way," he observed, "that nigger would have made mince-meat of me if you hadn't sung out just when you did. You're an awfully plucky girl! How did you get in here, anyhow?"

"Oh, I was sleeping here," I said, demurely.

"The deuce you were!" he said, in-

credulously. "Then you must have been sleeping under the bed."

"I was," I answered, even more primly.

"Sit down," he said, pushing forward a chair, and I sank into it, a limp mass of white draperies.

The story of my adventures afforded him great delight, and my evident dread of Mrs. Chalmers's tongue evoked his full sympathy.

"Don't worry the least in the world," he said. "I'll go and sleep in the hammock on the piazza, and leave you——"

"With the burglar in the dressing-room, to say nothing of your clothes!" I finished for him.

He looked rather foolish.

"Miss—?" he began.

"Willoughby," I supplied.

"Miss Willoughby," he went on, "this is the devil of a mess, and I don't see any way out of it except to let that nigger go. You couldn't pretend to have captured him single-handed, and if you did, there would be my clothes in the dressing-room to account for, as well as I myself wandering about like a sky-blue mandarin."

"But it isn't safe to open the door!" I exclaimed, clasping my hands in terror, for my nerve was all gone. "He might try a hand-to-hand fight again, and this time you might fail with your back-hand-lock."

"Back hammerlock, Miss Willoughby"—this with a bow. "Well, you see we have his razor, and I'll improvise a weapon to scare him."

He walked to the fireplace, and picked up the poker, which occupied the empty grate, and then tapped lightly at the locked door.

"Look here, Sambo!" he called. "I'm going to let you go, if you promise to make tracks out of this town."

"He has got your watch," I suggested.

"So far as opportunity goes he may have dressed himself in all my clothes—or yours!" said Jim, giggling.

"Hi, Sambo!" he went on. "I've got pistols and pokers handy now, and the young lady has got her finger

on the electric bell to alarm the house, but we'll let you out on the quiet if you first hand out any property of hers or mine you have got."

Here he unlocked the door, and opened it on a crack, and immediately his watch and chain swung through.

"That's an honest Injun," said Jim. "I'll trust him," and he flung open the door.

The negro paused.

"Say, boss," he said, "I swear I hain't got nuthin' else!"

Jim pointed to the window, and out the intruder went like a shot.

"I shall only trespass a few minutes longer on your patience, Miss Willoughby," Mr. Gillespie said, gently. "I must dress, you know, but if you are afraid to be left with the window open I will close the shutters."

I frankly admitted my fears, and he fastened the recalcitrant shutters and disappeared in the dressing-room, only this time he shut the door.

His toilette was more prolonged than it had been when getting ready for bed, and I was beginning to grow impatient to get rid of him, when he reappeared, beautifully neat.

"You see, I had to repack that trunk, and put on the clothes I left the house in, and brush them, for they were awfully dusty, and it took some time. Good night, Miss Willoughby. You're a perfect trump, and if ever you will let me do you any service, you will be making a proud man of Jim Gillespie."

"Good-bye," I said. "I hope the hammock won't be very uncomfortable."

"Well, it won't be, so to speak, cozy," he laughed, opening the shutters and stepping out.

I closed them after him, and for one hour I worked like a housemaid, reducing those rooms to order; between the wrestling match and Mr. Gillespie's several toilettes, they looked as if a cyclone had passed through them.

The next morning I was rather late in getting to breakfast, and Mrs. Chalmers was already seated by her adoring Miss Weston.

Bessie turned to bid me good morning.

"How tired you look, Bee!" she said, as she made my coffee. "I was just telling Mrs. Chalmers it was lucky we warned you to bolt your shutters, for Jim Gillespie came back in the night, hoping to get in—I fancy he even tried your window, and finally had to content himself with the hammock, where the servants found him this morning. He didn't make connections with his yacht, and walked all the way back, six good miles, through sand and dust."

Somebody came in the front door.

"Here he is now," Bessie continued. "He went to the club for his bath."

Mr. Gillespie, beautifully dressed, in some one else's clothes, came into the breakfast-room. Bessie hastened to introduce us.

"Miss Willoughby, this is Mr. Gillespie. I hope, Jim, you didn't leave any of your things about yesterday, for Miss Willoughby has succeeded to your room."

"Why, are you afraid she would annex them?" asked Mrs. Chalmers's harsh voice.

"I make Miss Willoughby the offer of everything of mine she found in that room," said Jim, laying his hand on his heart, as he slipped into the vacant chair beside me at the breakfast-table.



THE RAINING OF AUTUMN LEAVES

SAD is the heart of the lover
 When May has murmured good-bye;
 Lone is the heart of the lover
 When Summer sings no reply.

But nothing man knows of sadness,
 Nor heart of man truly grieves,
 Until he walks in the forest
 In the raining of Autumn leaves.

In a riot of splendid color,
 Through a tempest of wind and sun,
 The little dead leaves will whisper
 Their tales of a time long done,

When red were they once, and golden,
 And whirled in a sunlit rain
 Round the lingering feet of lovers
 Who tread not that path again.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



A DEFINITION

"PAPA, what is a wedding?"

"A wedding, my boy, is a place where you get a lot of presents that you spend all the rest of your life in paying back."

THE LOST FRIEND

YOU said you loved me, and I felt your hand,
 Erstwhile so quick to aid me and defend,
 Touch mine with some new gesture of command—
 Good-bye, my friend.

You said you loved me, and I saw your eyes,
 So eager yesterday to smile, commend,
 Darken with jealous doubting and surmise—
 Good-bye, my friend.

Oh, but the even road we went was sweet!
 Would we had walked together to the end.
 I doubt me this strange lover at my feet—
 Good-bye, my friend.

JOHN WINWOOD.



PSYCHOLOGICAL

BRIGGS—When did all your friends go back on you?

GRIGGS—In the moment when none of them needed me, and I needed all of them.



THE WAY THINGS GO

BRIGGS—After all, things even up in this life.

GRIGGS—Of what were you thinking?

“Well, before a man is married, he is miserable every minute he is away from his girl, and afterward he is miserable every minute he’s with her.”



PARKE—Honestly, now, old man, how much do you suppose I paid for that wine?

LANE—Well, I’m not good at guessing, but you must have paid something, didn’t you?

CAN LADIES SMOKE TOBACCO?

By Julian Hawthorne

NOT without serious reflection have I worded as above the title of this inquiry; for everybody—or almost everybody—knows that, as a matter of fact, ladies do smoke tobacco. But it is a laudable peculiarity of our Anglo-Saxon race that we are not satisfied with the assurance that a given thing is as it is; we must also believe that it is as it ought to be. And, if we decide that it ought not to be, then we decline to regard it as officially being at all. The mere physical occurrence of the phenomenon is of minor consequence. Ladies do smoke, you say?—not mere women, but actual ladies such as our own mothers and sisters? Yes, but that proves nothing. There have been snow-storms in June; calves with two heads; coal has been cheap. It is the moral side of the matter that concerns us. Is it, in the abstract, proper for ladies to smoke? or are the eternal decencies and fitnesses outraged by their so doing? If the latter be the case, then, no matter what you may see, say, or hear of ladies smoking, such mere facts cannot stand in the way of the everlasting truth that smoking, for ladies, is impossible. In the seventeenth century, in this country, there was a witchcraft delusion. Was it proper, normal, or permanent? Certainly not! It was a transient, regrettable freak of our imperfect human nature; and although women—ladies, even—were victims of the disorder, it passed away, and ladies are now, as before they had been, bewitching in a different sense only. Probably, among many other things that he said on the subject, Cotton Mather said at the

time that no lady could be a witch. Of course, he could not have meant that no ladies were actually witches; but, simply, that being a witch was not a lady's normal condition. As the event has proved, he was right; and in the same way may those be right who declare that no lady can smoke. But on the other hand, it may turn out that these persons are wrong; and inasmuch as the illusion—to call it that—of smoking ladies appears to be on the increase, the time has come when the matter should be investigated with that earnestness to which it is obviously entitled.

One is, of course, tempted to treat the subject analytically, after the German fashion, dividing it into heads, as: 1. What is Tobacco? 2. What is Man? 3. What is Woman? 4. In what respects do women differ morally, ethically, esthetically and physically from men? 5. How does tobacco affect men and women, respectively? 6. What is custom, or habitude? 7. What relation, if any, does custom, or habitude, bear to morality or propriety?—and so on. I say this method of handling the topic is full of temptations. But my mind happens to be of the synthetic rather than of the analytic or Teutonic order, and my nature is given more to the imaginative and picturesque pursuit of truth than to the scientific. I am prone to respond to the summons of intuition rather than to those of logic and the Binomial Theorem. I shall, therefore, resist the above-mentioned allurements, and lump the whole thing together, as it comes to me in real life; perhaps, after all, it will amount to

the same in the end. It is true that man consists of various parts, such as skeleton, muscles, nerves, viscera, skin, etc.; in spite of which I am apt to think of a man not in this divided, anatomical-museum state, but as a living, united organism walking about and wearing clothes. And similar to this is my attitude on the question of smoking ladies. I see them smoke, and the spectacle affects me in certain ways, and I think about it. Let me, then, in my own way, try to communicate the upshot of my thoughts.

The tobacco plant is a handsome shrub; a viscid, pubescent annual is, I think, its botanical description. I have seen in the West Indies large plantations of it; long rows of vigorous, bright-green leaves sprouting from a stalk that reaches to the height of three or four feet; it bears pretty pink flowers, and, altogether, wears an inviting aspect. Cultivated in pots, it would be an ornament to any lady's drawing-room. Its aspect as prepared for commerce is different, but even thus it is not abhorrent; the various shades of brown are rather agreeable—more so, I am sure, than is the case with tea. Tea, in fact, though quite as pretty as tobacco, as it grows out of the ground, has not, to my mind, an especially attractive aspect as it lies dried in the tea-caddy. It smells good, no doubt; but so does tobacco—to give the devil his due. And here another thought obtrudes itself. Is not breathing to be regarded, in itself, as quite as uncarnal a function as drinking? Does not a pretty girl seem pretty while inhaling air into her lungs, the delicate nostrils slightly expanding, the bosom gently rising and falling? The poet Keats, in his sonnet, speaks of imagining himself—

Pillowed upon my fair Love's ripening breast
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
and appears to regard the situation as agreeable; but I am not aware that he has ever pictured his Love as drinking—not even so much as a cup of tea. There is a very appetizing little cold

collation prepared in "The Eve of Saint Agnes":

Candied apple, quince and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

But you will notice that there is not a drain of any sort of liquor in the whole bill of fare, though the "lucent syrups," perhaps, come pretty near it. But even if there were, you will also observe that neither Madeleine nor Porphyro partakes of these delectable viands; they are in too much haste to get away, and leave them all standing there untouched. The only people in the poem who drink are the "bloated wassailers," "drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead," none of whom is a lady. Of course, Keats does occasionally speak of drinking, and in no forbidding tones, as for example:

Oh, for a draught of vintage that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt
mirth!

Oh, for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world
unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest
dim.

Here, however, it is not his Love who is supposed to place her lips to the purple-stained mouth of the beaker, but Keats himself. It is the same with old Omar; he himself is always drinking, but, though Saki pours out the wine, he never shows her to us in the act of sharing the draught. "Turn down an empty glass!" he says to her; he does not tell her to empty it. And as with Keats and Omar, so with the other poets; we have not leisure to quote them all. The inference is plain that the poets regard breathing as a proper feminine act, but are not so sure about the expediency of letting them drink. Well, then, to come to the point of this part of our argument, what is smoking but breathing? You inhale and exhale the fumes of the burning

tobacco, and that is smoking. Of course, these fumes are visible, whereas plain air is not—except on a cold day, when you may see your Love apparently smoking, all but the cigarette between her fingers! But you would never think of forbidding her to breathe because the warmth of her sweet lungs condenses the atmosphere, would you? Why, then, should you look askance because the aroma of the Indian weed, instead of a low temperature, is what certifies to your eyes the fact of her respiration? And why, furthermore, should you be so unpoetical, if not illogical, as to contemplate her with entire equanimity while she swallows cup after cup of tea? Is it not an act comparatively gross?—and is not tea injurious to her digestive tract? Let us concede that the smoking of a Turkish cigarette is injurious also—though there are two opinions on that point—still, if she is resolved to do one or the other thing, why should we object to the aerial and spiritual function of smoking rather than to the material one of drinking? Is it possible that there is any irrational prejudice at the bottom of this seemingly arbitrary discrimination?

The ground of your objection, however—from this point of view—may be that smoking involves not breathing merely, but holding in the hand the object—the cigarette, say—which supplies the smoke. This object must be applied ever and anon to the lips, and the fumes drawn from it. If this be your contention, I must remark that, in my opinion, it possesses many of the characteristics of the boomerang. It would be worth your while to make a journey to Spain, and study the ladies of that country handling their national weapon, the fan. We have fans in America and in Europe, I know; but it is best to go to the source and headquarters of the instrument. Any one may fall in love with a Spanish señorita under any circumstances; but no one can help doing so who has long been subjected to the witchery of her fan. Next to her eyes, the hand of a beauti-

ful woman is the most expressive and irresistible part of her. And what are fans made for unless to enable a beautiful woman to exhibit her hand under the most favorable conditions possible? They may enhance the fascination of the eyes also; but it is for the hand that they are especially intended. Look at the turns of that wrist!—mark the subtle play of those tapering fingers; consider, indeed, the inclinations of the head, the movements of the arm, the poses of the entire body, which are induced and suggested by the play of the fan! Could there be imagined anything else so graceful and charming?

Yes, there is one other thing as effective as the fan, if not more so, and that is the cigarette. It is lighter and smaller than the fan, more ethereal, more evanescent. It rests between the very tips of the fingers. It reminds one of a tiny wand, fit for the use of an enchantress. And if in that hand there be any symmetry and delicacy, the cigarette brings it into view to a degree not possible even to its sole rival, the fan. The fair operator holds it, we will suppose, between the forefinger and the thumb, or between the first and middle fingers. Observe in what a lovely gradation the other fingers curl away from it, how the wrist inclines backward, forming, with the under contour of the forearm, the nodus of the curve of beauty! Notice the sweep, slow and full of refined languor, with which the tiny shaft of odorous fire is lifted to the lips, held there a moment, and then removed! With what an ineffable kissing movement do the lips meet it!—with how charming a pout do they emit the airy cloud which they inhale! See the head incline gently forward to accept the tribute; see with what a voluptuous gesture of delicate satiety it leans backward, to send that fairy cloud-pillar ceilingward! Anon, behold the exquisite deftness with which the pearly nail of the littlest finger kicks off the ash which has been forming during these few moments. Consider the dreamy relaxation which insensi-

bly declares itself throughout the disposition of the lovely lady's limbs and body! How soothed and satisfied she seems! Along what pleasant pathways stray her vagrant thoughts! And now, if you please, compare her with her amiable sister sipping tea. Is not that forward projection of the head somewhat ungainly? Is not the attitude of the arm, crooked at the elbow, a trifle stiff and awkward? The body, from the hips, is raised rigidly erect, expressing the latent apprehension lest some of the liquid fall in the lap. The mouth absorbs the beverage with, perhaps, a slight sipping sound; and you may mark the passage of the draught down the extended throat. Will you affirm that there is, in any part of this transaction, a trace of the elegant and queenly undulations which accompany the smoking of the cigarette? Is it not, in comparison, almost vulgar? No, no!—if we are to approach this topic from the poetic and esthetic side, the less said about tea-drinking the better, after that picture of the cigarette lady! And although the portrait of a lady making tea has sometimes been painted with approval, what is it beside that of one rolling a cigarette? It was a Spanish señorita, by-the-bye, who taught me the mysteries of that art; and the reason I was so unconscionably long in acquiring it was, that I was too much ravished by the beauty of the spectacle which she presented to be able to turn my mind to the study of the operation itself. I believe, indeed, that I was able to accomplish the rolling only after I had been separated from the roller. Even now, after the lapse of a generation, when I recall the tip of a rosy tongue appearing between the edges of pearly teeth, to seal and complete the captivating achievement, my hand trembles, and the tobacco is spilled on the ground!

Yet far from me be it, who have assumed to put on, for the nonce, judicial ermine, to appear in the light of a special pleader on one or the other side! In truth, as will presently appear, I am rigorously impartial. What

has been above stated is fact, and the jury must consider it; but not all female smoking is a fit theme for a picture by Greuze or a sonnet by Keats.

When I was a small boy I sat beside the hearth of a great country farmhouse, and gave ear to the legends related to me by an aged crone, the grandmother of the little commonwealth of the surrounding twenty miles. The logs in the wide fireplace were from six to ten inches thick; they spluttered and crackled, blazed and glowed, and painted one side of the wrinkled story-teller with red, which quivered like the ruby light transmitted through a beaker of the blushful Hippocrene. The shaft of the chimney was vast and cavernous, as beseemed a structure erected in the days when witches took flight up through the like on broomsticks; and when it needed sweeping, the farmer would load his heavy shot-gun, and fire vertically up it; and with the roaring echo of the explosion would come tumbling down in a sable cloud a barrellful of soot. But the picture presented by the aged crone was peaceful, though instinct with imaginative tremors and weird delights. And ever, as she spoke, she held between her yellow fangs a seasoned pipe of corncob, loaded with such black and pungent tobacco as none of this softer age may dare attempt. How the ruddy coal glowed in the throat of it as she sucked! how the blue smoke, caught in the draught, careered up the chimney! I believed, gazing upon her, that she had been born ancient, and with that pipe of corncob between her withered jaws. The tales she told have been forgotten, or they have entered so deeply into the texture and substance of the listener's mind that they cannot be detached from it; but the vision of the rustic pythoness smoking there I never can forget. She was no Andalusian beauty, assuredly; but the swarthy pipe with its pith of red-hot coal was as essential and proper a part of her as was the delicate roll of Havana in the pointed finger-tips of the daughter of the

hidalgos. Rembrandt should have been my painter for the former, and Dante should have sung her, seated by the ample hearth of Tophet. For if beauty lie in harmony, then was she, too, beautiful, though in so grim a key.

Again, there rises in my memory a scene of similar character, though beheld many a year later. I had been plodding all day over the barren moors and bogs of southern Ireland, and came at dusk to a solitary cabin, containing but a single room, with a sort of loft above. It was a piece of the earth on which it stood; built of its clay, and thatched with its grass. Pausing at the door to ask my way, I was bidden hospitably to enter. It contained within its fifteen feet square the entire *dramatis personæ* and apparatus of the local mode of existence: bare-legged children, their father and mother, and the antique grandmother of the household, immeasurably old, squatting beside the peat-encumbered hearth. There were also among the inmates a ragged hound, a brood of hens, and a huge, fat sow, which I did not at first discern in the duskiness of the interior, till she presently scrambled to her feet from her lair in a dark corner, and bolted across the earthen floor, nearly upsetting me by the way. Then came a mellow voice, sweet with brogue, from the lips of the ancient one beside the peat fire; the voice of a true lady and woman of the world, making its way past the black clay pipe whose fragrance, keen and pungent, had asserted itself from the first above the other fragrances of the narrow interior. The owner of the voice and of the pipe had observed the embarrassment of the stranger, and had divined its cause. "Dhrive out the pig, Mikel!" she said to her brawny son, the master of the dwelling. "Dhrive her out; sure, don't ye see the gentleman is not accustomed to her?" Nothing could be finer or truer than that courtesy; and I have always felt that it came with a finer grace along with the whiff of smoke on which the words were borne. Could any one imagine the pipe and the old

lady divorced from each other?—yet she was a real lady, and her pipe was filled with something which, be the brand what it might, passed for tobacco.

The moral of these apologues is plain: whatever is fitting is right. The world is a big country, comprising other places besides London, Boston and New York; comprising, too, inhabitants of the most various constitution and temperament. Bigamy, which is bad form in New England, in Constantinople is a badge of virtue; and the husband who is scandalized at the spectacle of his wife smoking a cigar at a public concert in Cambridge, Mass., minds it no more than a bottle of smelling-salts if he happen to have been born and married in Buda-Pesth. But let us resume our argument.

Like any other prudent and docile man of mature years, when the problem considered in this paper was presented to my attention, I lost no time in laying it before the higher and finer intelligences which are lodged in the minds of the ladies of my immediate environment. One of the first observations which they vouchsafed was, that the smell of tobacco-smoke in the breath and garments was not a lady-like smell. Great weight is to be attached to this ruling. A lady is a little girl grown large; and little girls are made, we have been credibly told, of sugar and spice and all that's nice, including, unquestionably, all manner of delectable perfumes. Now, the odor of good tobacco, while it is burning, may seem to you a good odor, or not, according to your idea of what a good odor is; but the odor of even good stale tobacco—the butt end of an old Havana cigar, for example, or of a pipe which has held, once upon a time, the finest Latakia—cannot be affirmed, even by the warmest advocates of the weed, precisely the right thing for a lady's handkerchief. When you went courting, you would have been taken a trifle aback, I fancy, had the lovely girl to whom you paid your addresses received you with a redolence of vet-

eran pipes emanating from her person. You might even have been somewhat embarrassed had the lovely lips which whispered to you her maidenly consent to your petition conveyed to your olfactories, at the same time, the silent information that she had lately finished a package of cigarettes. I say, this indictment against tobacco seems to me a very weighty one. Of course, the young lady of whom we have been talking must smell this same objectionable odor on your own person, and she accepts and loves you nevertheless; but then, among us Anglo-Saxons, there is a smell proper to men, and a smell not proper to ladies; it may be prejudice in us to make the distinction—but what is more obstinate than a prejudice?—what less amenable to the persuasions of reason? Magnanimous persons may be able to overcome it; and the training of a generation or two may enable all of us to get used to it; it must be so, else how would Spaniards and Poles get married? But then, if we are to wait for a generation or two, how are our immediate offspring to get themselves born? It is vain to urge that a smell more or less is a slight thing; it is not a slight thing, but a vital one; it would hardly be extravagant to declare that smells rule the world. Possibly, by arts of the toilette, into the mysteries of which it would be profane for man to inquire, ladies could rid themselves of that aroma, and, perhaps, though smoking, they might smoke so little, and such light tobaccos, that the riddance could be easily accomplished; still, that would hardly be a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. No, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, it must be conceded that this objection of the parties of the other part is not easily to be surmounted. True love, to be sure, who laughs at locksmiths, may laugh at tobaccoconists also; of course he would, when it came to the point. Meanwhile, let us confess that, being in the stage of civilization and provincialism that, in this twentieth century, we are, we would a little rather that Araminta should not com-

plicate her natural heavenly fragrance with the reek of defunct tobacco ashes. There is one hypothetical escape from the dilemma; science, which has performed so many other marvels, may invent a tobacco which shall leave no traces after smoking it. But, though hope should spring immortal in the human breast, yet there are such things as chimeras—there are iridescent dreams. And I cannot help thinking that, if there were a tobacco which left no bad odor after it was smoked, it would also diffuse no good odor while one was smoking it; and in that case it would not be tobacco at all.

Another pearl of wisdom which fell from the lips of the fair sages whom I consulted was to the effect that "it made all the difference how one did it." And that is surely a shot that hits the bull's-eye. In all things, but in nothing more than in this, is the personal equation decisive. There are persons who can do nothing acceptably, or without offense; there are others whose manner gives a charm to I care not what heresy or solecism. Have you not met men and women who could, and did, say successfully and captivatingly, to your face, things which the person standing next to them could not, without shame and disaster, whisper in the black bottom of a mine-shaft? It is a natural, incommunicable, miraculous felicity; a gift of the gods, rendering the gifted immune, free from all mortal mischances and mistakes. What they accomplish is free from any taint of art, self-consciousness, or effort; it is as free and frank as a child's play. We feel that it belongs to them, and we accord them room and liberty—which they use always as liberty, never as license. So, there are ladies of the finest breeding, of the most feminine delicacy, who can smoke not merely a cigarette, but a cigar—I would almost say a pipe—and yet only add to their charm by doing so. It is not tact, exactly, for that seems to imply training; it is a happy, natural endowment—a kindly mixing of the elements, a fairy birth-

right. All argument, all objections, are hushed and abashed in their presence. To behold them is to enlarge our conception of the power, grace and depth of human nature. They announce new laws, they reveal unguessed horizons; but these are still open to themselves alone; we cannot catch their step or hold their pace. They are the triumph and the mystery of creation.

And yet there is no great mystery in the fact that one woman can smoke without detriment to us or to herself, and another cannot. One is free from self-consciousness, the other is hobbled and handcuffed by it. If you think it is wrong, it is wrong—for you. If you do it out of bravado, you are a vulgar hussy, though you be of the strain of Vere de Vere; but if you possess the greatness to be truly indifferent to outside opinion, or if you are so sincerely innocent as not to suspect yourself of audacity, you may safely produce your cigarette-case in the drawing-room of Lady Pharisee herself. Such is the situation as regards this great question, here and now. Hereafter it may be different, and at the present time, as we have remarked, there are nations whose women are, and have ever been, unhampered in this direction, and who smoke with the simplicity and confidence which only a few rare souls among us possess, being supported and secured by the mighty impersonal spirit of the public opinion and custom of their country. But now and then one of these chartered libertines strays from her native land, and finds her way to us, bringing her country's custom with her; and she, in her naïve pursuance of her habit, acts the part, no doubt, of an efficient missionary of the weed. Very grave,

earnest and preoccupied ladies I have met among these, as well as thoughtless maidens; and I would have thought of complaining of the vaporous rings and wreaths wherewith they enveloped themselves as little as of their accent or the color of their hair. In short, smoking, for ladies, like kissing, goes by favor.

And that, after all, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, seems to be the upshot of the whole matter. One is taken, and the other is left. I might also instance the case of the college girl, who smokes out of pure deviltry, just because the college rules forbid it. I did not discuss this class with my mentors; I can hardly say why; perhaps because such rebels represent nothing but the ebullition of high spirits, and the natural protest of the healthy human creature against being tied down by arbitrary regulations. It is not the tobacco, but independence, that they care for. They are quite as likely as any one else to become staid and strict matrons, hereafter.

In conclusion, I would say to the crusaders against this new phenomenon, do not disquiet your souls in vain. It seems highly improbable that American ladies, as a body, will ever seriously take up smoking. If, after giving it a fair trial, they decide that it remunerates them, they will adopt it; if not, they won't—though doubtless individuals will keep it up for individual reasons. And perhaps the most sensible thing we can do is to leave the whole thing to individual judgment, which, the more we seek to oppose or control it, the more obstinately will it follow its own course—at any rate, in a matter in which nothing more—or less—serious than taste, expediency and personal aptitude are concerned.



THE RETORT COURTEOUS

HENRIETTA—You will never see eighteen again.
 GRACE—Not when I look at you, dear.

MANY ADVISERS

MY friend, the pale Philosopher, has said
 That if I learn his lessons I may see
 The light that shines around high Wisdom's head—
 But in Love's eyes is light enough for me.

The subtle Worldling tells me that I lose
 Many advantages of his wide view
 In this rose-bowered garden that I choose—
 But Love has vistas that he never knew.

The Worshiper of Wealth has plans for me
 To wed with Power, that I may command
 His gold to serve me unreservedly—
 He knows not of the treasures in Love's hand.

The Trumpeter of Fame blows loud and sweet,
 To lure me from my Love, and set me free
 Outside my garden with unshackled feet—
 But my Love keeps my keys of Poesy.

The gentle Priestess, whom I love the best,
 Reminds me that the pulse of Love must cease,
 Bidding me seek the spirit's place of rest—
 But in Love's arms I find a perfect peace.

O Love, what care I whether they are right—
 The cold advisers, or the words they said—
 When in the teeming silence of the night
 I hear thy heart throb underneath my head!

ELSA BARKER.



A DEEPLY-DESIRED CONSUMMATION

"WHEN the millennium comes," said the Pruntytown Philosopher, whose rheumatism had been hectoring him worse than usual, "I expect that the great moral shows which visit us will make a special feature of their chauffeurs, chaperons, raconteurs, elocutionists and professional colonels, in cages; agitators, strikers and walking delegates, in dens; propaganders, calaminosticators and philanthrolibraridonationists, in lairs; Populists properly stuffed and mounted; and Prohibitionists, statisticians and college presidents, carefully dried and mummified. And the sooner they commence the good work, the quicker all seasons of the year will seem like perpetual Summertime."

VLADIMIR'S VILLA

By Janet Laing

PROLOGUE

EVEN after knowing him for two years, during which time he was alternately the plague and the delight of our lives, Snaggs and I never could tell for certain whether or not Vladimir was laughing at us.

This, in my humble opinion, was not because we were stupid, but because he was so confoundingly clever.

He *was* clever! There was nothing he could not do. There was no one like him. Even outsiders said that. As for us, in spite of the torments we frequently underwent at his hands—he was constantly playing tricks upon us—we adored him while we partly feared. “Make the most of me while you have me,” he used to say, as he shook the table to keep me from doing my German exercise, or maddened Snaggs by putting his metronome at *molto prestissimo* when he was practising an *adagio* thing; “I’ll never write to you, remember.”

“So much the better!” of course we both retorted; but when, for three long years after he left us, we heard nothing whatever either from him or of him, nobody would have believed how much we missed him.

Three long years—aye, and a month more, for it was on a broiling June morning that we bade him that riotous good-bye at the Frankfurt railway station, and it was not until a certain rainy evening last July that I found his strange letter on my mantelpiece at Dullton. All that time, as I say, we had had no communication of any kind whatever.

Of course, his name is no more Vladi-

mir than mine is Fibbs, and Snaggs’s is Snaggs. We were given to nicknames in the old Frankfurt days, and Vladimir’s constant reference in conversation to his uncle, the Russian Count Vladimir Michelowski, was enough in our eyes to settle his synonym forever. We always believed this foreign aristocrat to be merely a myth—the fantastic creation of Vladimir’s extremely original and inventive brain—until the day that the news of Michelowski’s death came, coupled with the startling intelligence that he had left his nephew, without the slightest doubt, a millionaire!

How well I remember the evening of that day! I, Mortimer Smith, sent to get a knowledge of German in preparation for a dull business life, and poor old Snaggs, with no prospect but that of giving music lessons and droning on church organs forever amen, could simply do nothing but stare open-mouthed in envy and admiration at our companion, transformed so suddenly from a poor student of music, a mere violinist in the opera orchestra, into a veritable Monte Cristo of romance!

The hero himself was radiant. I can see him now, as, taking up his stand on the top of Snaggs’s battered old grand piano, while we two sprawled, one on the window-seat, the other on the bed, he flung a faded, green, ink-stained table-cloth around him like a Roman toga, and made us his farewell speech.

No material had been wasted in the making of Vladimir. The epithet “skinny” expressed him exactly. If you can figure to yourself a youth of twenty or so, of medium height, and

singularly lithe and active in his movements, of dark, sunburnt complexion, in curious contrast to the steely, light-blue eyes, and the mass of straw-colored hair, brushed straight back from the forehead after the most approved musical models, a large mouth, gleaming white teeth, and a tongue whose length Snaggs and I can vouch for, you have before your mind's eye the rough outlines at least of this queer individual.

"Friends!" he cried, waving his arms and then folding them theatrically—he always was rather theatrical—"friends, I have done with it."

"It," of course, meant the music. The Count Michelowski, judging presumably from his nephew's brilliant talent for violin playing, had chosen to provide him with an elaborate musical education, with the result that that youth on every occasion openly avowed his aversion to the art.

"What about the opera?" put in Snaggs. We all knew he had written one, which he had vainly endeavored to have performed. I suppose it was too weird for the managers. All Vladimir's things were weird.

"A fig for the opera!" he cried, snapping his fingers. "Who wants to write operas when there is anything better to do? Who cares for the abstract, when he can have the concrete? Do you think if Michelowski had given me a decent allowance I should ever have thought of writing an opera? A fig for the opera, I say! I shall make a bonfire of it to celebrate my emancipation!"

Even if you don't agree with Vladimir, it's no good trying to argue with him—besides, he never gives you time to begin. On he went again.

"Emancipation! Yes!—for it is emancipation. Is it not a slavery to be obliged to study—to grub for the roots of things? Why do we grub? Why should we grub? Is it because we enjoy it? I tell you no! Pleasure! There's no pleasure, I say, in digging beneath the surface. Once penetrate the outside of things, and you are appalled by the depths of the unexplored.

Better leave it all alone, if we can, and dance while we may where we find a footing! Money, money, money!" he cried, throwing out his arms, and executing a kind of *pas seul* on the creaking piano lid; "the greatest thing of all. And it is mine! Thousands, thousands, thousands! How I shall fling it about! How I shall skip from one thing to another! How I shall invent—carry out—destroy! Three cheers for the ghost of Michelowski—hurrah, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

"You fellows," he went on, presently, while we sat petrified by this strange language, "you fellows think perhaps that, because we have been chums—friends in adversity, as they call it, and I having no relations living—I shall offer to share and share alike with you! Don't deceive yourselves! I'm sorry for you, but the fortune's mine, and shall be mine! You shall go on toiling and moiling all your lives for a few paltry pounds, while I revel, swim, plunge over the head in a silvery, golden sea! To-night I treat you to supper in the Palmen-garten; to-morrow I go, disappear from you for ever. Why? I was born selfish, and I'm glad of it!"

Vladimir kept his word. The evening which followed was one of uproarious mirth. No one could be more amusing than our host, and he exerted himself to entertain us. It was dawn before we went to bed, and I for one did not sleep at all, as Vladimir, whose room was above mine, was clattering about all night, packing his things. Next day, without saying good-bye to a soul except ourselves, and leaving all his engagements for lessons, orchestra, etc., unfulfilled, he took the morning train to Hamburg, and, as he had expressed it, "disappeared."

I

HAVE heard from Vladimir. Shall we accept the invitation or not? Answer by return.
SNAGGS.

So ran the postcard that I found lying on my breakfast-table the morning after Vladimir's letter arrived.

I took that epistle out of my pocket, and, as I slowly drank my coffee, re-read it carefully.

DEAR FIBBS:

How's the grubbing getting on? Tiresome? Eh? Stodgy? Eh? As for me, it has been better even than I expected. Gorgeous—superb—magnificent! I could tell you things that I have seen and done that would make your mouth water and your hair stand on end. But I won't. It's too much trouble. I am writing to Snaggs at the same time. I am copying his letter off yours. You are surprised that I should write you, still more surprised that I should know your addresses. I can see your two lugubrious faces, with the expression of cod-fish and the intelligence of owls, gazing at my letters as you used to do at me! But I'm not going to tell you how I found out, or how I know that you are drudging at a low salary in the office of a linoleum factory, while Snaggs spends his days in an atmosphere of Czerny and Clementi as performed by school-misses, varied by the weekly wranglings of the church choir. What I'm going to tell you is this, and now attention, if you please.

Do you know where Slithering Point is? If you don't, look it up on the map. You'll find it there. Great Britain, of course. That's where my villa is. You didn't know I had a villa? Well, I can't help that. Suffice it to say that I *have* a villa, and that I now offer it to you and Snaggs, rent free, and all expenses paid, for one week, dating from Tuesday next. Take it or leave it.

It is a good offer. I know you are thinking of a holiday together, but I don't care twopence whether you accept my invitation or not. That's your lookout. Of course, you will not see me. I shall not be there. It would bore me too much, you understand, but I shall leave Molto Tranquillo, my confidential servant, in charge. He is deaf and dumb, but you won't mind that. He will cook your meals, and attend to everything you want; also meet you at Slithering station, which you will find is, as your remarks used to be, somewhat far from the Point! Once more—take it or leave it. Address your reply to

The House of Fountains,
Slithering Point,
Frithshire,
and be quick about it.

VLADIMIR.

As this was Saturday, and no post left Dullton on Sunday, Snaggs and I had little enough time to make up our minds. How Vladimir knew of our projected tour together, as well as of our whereabouts and the details of our daily life, I did not stop to in-

quire. Slithering, though I had certainly never heard of such a place, was a real village, since the postmark on the envelope was evidently genuine. All expenses to be paid—attendance and food provided! It was a chance in a thousand! Tuesday was the very day my holidays began. Snaggs, who was more of his own master than I, could, I knew, arrange to come then.

I scribbled "accept" on a card, when I reached the office, and, to save time, sent one of the boys round with it to Snaggs. Then I composed what I thought a very suitable reply to Vladimir's curious, but generous, invitation.

Monday evening Snaggs and I spent together at my lodgings, poring over Bradshaws and the map of Great Britain. With some difficulty we found Slithering, marked very small, near the east coast of Scotland. The "Point" was not marked at all. Probably it was a mere hamlet, or perhaps the villa was the only house there.

We had just decided on the route and the probable fares, when the post brought a letter from our destination, containing the exact sum required for the journey and a half-sheet of paper on which was scrawled:

M. T. will meet you, as arranged, at four o'clock. You can't mistake the zebra. *Viel vergnügen.*

V.

"Who but Vladimir," remarked Snaggs, "would think of keeping a zebra instead of a horse? He never was like other people."

"If he had been," I returned, sagely, "he never would have invited us."

"True," said Snaggs, "and there really is something refreshing in coming into contact with such an unconventional and original mind. But do you know, if you were not to be with me, I should never think of going. There is something about the whole affair that seems to me most uncanny!"

"Oh, bosh!" I replied, as we parted for the night, to dream till the morrow of the "House of Fountains."

II

"Good gracious!" I remarked, and no wonder.

For one thing, I didn't like the look of the driver at all. He was a thin, spare figure, clad in a long, light mackintosh coat, his features almost entirely concealed by the overhanging felt hat, beneath which the thick tufts of gray hair hung down at either side, and a large, purple, woolen comforter in which, in spite of the heat, his neck and the lower part of his face were swathed. Add to this that, leaving us seated in the cart in the middle of the one street of Slithering Point, surrounded by the villagers—a position in itself enough to embarrass two bashful young men unused to being centres of curiosity—Tranquillo was calmly carrying on a conversation by means of the dumb alphabet with a grocer in an adjoining shop—that Snaggs for the first time in his life was holding the reins—that the zebra was frisky and the audience out-spoken, and you may have some faint idea of the state of our feelings.

The remarks we overheard did not tend to make us more comfortable.

"Eh, Jock," said one, "look at they two chaps, drivin' with the dummy behind the strippit cuddy!"

"Wae's me!" was the reply; "they'll be for awa' up to the big hoose! I wonder they're no feared."

"Eh, aye! If they kent what I ken——"

"Or if they'd seen what I saw!"

"Losh! They'd be skelpin' awa' back to the station, puir craters, afore ye could say 'knife!'"

"Didn't I tell you?" muttered Snaggs, under his breath, trying to look quite at his ease, and only partially succeeding. "Didn't I say there was something uncanny about it? Ask them what they've seen!"

"Nonsense!" I replied, in the same tone; "don't let them see you mind them, you fool! They are doing it only to annoy us!"

"If you won't, I will," said Snaggs, desperately, and he certainly would

have, I believe, if the "dummy" had not just at that moment finished his conversation, leaped into his seat, and resumed the reins with such a jerk that the zebra snorted, threw up his head, and set off at a rattling canter along the dusty road.

Never have I experienced such a drive! What a pace we went at! It could only have lasted minutes, but to me it seemed hours! Fields, hedges, beach, sea, distant ships, stone walls, whirled before my eyes, until I closed them, and clutched the seat with both hands to keep myself from being bumped out altogether! A moment more, and a yell from Snaggs made me look up again. My heart stood still with horror! Quite close to us—right across the way, its ostentatious gilding glittering in the afternoon sun, was a high, massive iron gate, into which we were apparently wildly charging!

"Man!" I shouted, at the top of my voice, "do you not see the gate is shut? Tighten the reins this minute, you idiot, or we're all dead men!"

You may as well speak to the wind as to a deaf-mute! On we went, faster than ever. The bars were within three yards of us—two yards—one—convulsively I tried to snatch the reins—Snaggs fairly gasped with terror! Next minute I, too, gasped—this time in sheer and blank amazement. The heavy gate had swung of its own accord, back on its hinges, and, remaining open just long enough to allow of our passing helter-skelter through, it closed behind us again with a resounding clash as of the falling of a hundred tea-trays!

Standing once more on *terra firma* at the door of what was, after all, a very ordinary-looking villa, and watching Tranquillo quietly removing our Gladstone bags from the cart, while the zebra browsed *ad libitum* upon the nearest flower-bed, I felt positively ashamed of my recent alarm, and inclined to scoff at Snaggs, who was still "all of a tremble."

"Tut, man! don't look as if you had

seen a ghost!" I called after him, laughing, as he slowly followed Tranquillo up-stairs to his room. "It was an automatic gate, that's all! Contact with an original and inventive mind, you see—refreshing, eh?"

Still laughing, I entered my room, which was on the ground floor, and just under Snaggs's. Everything was arranged in the most luxurious style, and my spirits rose higher and higher. Coming out again into the hall, I lounged near the open door, waiting for my companion to appear before giving orders as to dinner, meanwhile breathing in as much ozone as I could, and gazing out on the Summer landscape in a pleasantly dreamy frame of mind. Suddenly, as a violent thrill went through me from head to foot, there was an ear-splitting bang, followed by a growl as of a den of lions in a thunder-storm.

Stumbling forward, half-stunned, and looking around, I found that I had been leaning against a huge brass gong which had evidently just sounded for dinner.

"Automatic, too," I muttered to myself, and, as I had never heard of, much less heard, such a thing before, I must say I felt shaken; but, noticing Snaggs with a white, scared face descending the stairs, I put my hands in my pockets, and, beginning to whistle, sauntered toward him as nonchalantly as I could.

"Fibbs!" said Snaggs, in a quavering voice, "what in all the world was that?"

"My dear fellow," I said, "have you never heard a gong before?"

"Gong!" exclaimed Snaggs; "if you'd said a dozen gongs——"

"Well," I returned, lightly, "I'm sure it was nothing to that Wagner orchestra you took me to hear the other day. I thought you'd have liked it. As an omen of dinner to me it was charming. Come on!" and I led the way to the dining-room.

How he had managed it I do not know. It could not have been more than ten minutes since we had last seen him, in

his driving-coat, carrying up our bags, yet now Tranquillo stood at the side-board gazing meditatively at the elaborately laid round table in the centre of the room, and absently polishing a large silver spoon with a corner of the napkin he had tucked under his left arm.

I have never been good at describing clothes. I seldom know what the women of my acquaintance have on, nor can I give now the precise details of our attendant's dress. Three things, however, I did notice:

1st. His loose velvet coat was long, nearly reaching to the ground, and there was a glitter and sparkle of heavy gold fringe and amber buttons about it.

2d. He wore a cap of the same material, drawn down over his forehead, almost as far as the straight black brows; and,

3d. His mouth and chin were still concealed by a richly embroidered black silk scarf twisted around the neck several times, and then fastened at the back by a large gold safety-pin.

"Got the toothache, apparently, poor old chap," I remarked, in the intervals of enjoying some of the best soup I have ever tasted. "Wonder where Vladimir picked him up? Looks rather an outlandish customer."

"Capital cook, though," said Snaggs, without glancing up from his plate; "never saw a better."

It is a good thing for a nervous person to be a gourmand. You would have been surprised to see how Snaggs's apprehensions melted into thin air under the genial influence of first-class ox-tail.

"Yes," I replied; "and then it's a great advantage, his being deaf. You can say whatever you wish before him."

"So you can," said Snaggs, finishing off his last spoonful with regret; "but it's awkward, too, sometimes. Now, for instance, the old fool has gone away with the tureen, just as I wanted to ask for a second helping. How in the world am I to make him hear?"

I looked around. Tranquillo, sure enough, had departed.

"You might try the gong," I suggested, jocularly, leaning forward with both elbows on the table in an easy way I have.

"True," exclaimed Snaggs in the same tone, comfortably following my example.

As to what happened next neither of us has any clear idea. All we know is that, in less time than it takes to tell it, the whole table, covered as it was, had disappeared, and we two were sitting vacantly staring at each other across a big round hole in the floor. How we did not ourselves fall into it is to me a mystery still. True, we both jerked back, as we felt the table sinking, but if our chairs had not been, as we afterward found, firmly riveted to the floor, I am convinced that we should both have broken our necks.

For a full minute, we sat paralyzed. Then, with a rush, our senses returned to us, and, speechless with fear and wrath combined, we tore from the room to search the kitchen-regions for Tranquillo. For a quarter of an hour at least, we ransacked every hole and corner below-stairs. Not a soul was to be seen, and what we supposed to be the kitchen door was locked on the inside. Tired of battering and kicking at it, and more furious than ever at our non-success, we returned to the dining-room, when lo! there stood the "dummy" again, absently polishing another silver spoon, and, what was more, there stood the table just as before, save that the soup-plates had been replaced by a dainty second course, consisting of all the "delicacies of the season"!

"Great Scott!" was all we had power to exclaim, as, feeling for all the world like the heroes of some Arabian Nights' Entertainment, we gingerly seated ourselves once more at this unique, but festive, board, and finished the meal, which extended through several excellent courses, in absolute silence, having for once in our lives nothing at all to say!

III

"COULD we have imagined it, do you think?" said Snaggs, as we were returning an hour or two later from a stroll on the beach.

"We couldn't both have imagined it," I rejoined, and we relapsed into silence.

The still Summer night was falling. Behind us, the moonlight was making a long, silvery pathway across the calm gray sea, and down in the village a few warmer lights had begun to twinkle here and there in the cottage windows. Before us, on the height, stood Vladimir's villa, black against the sky, and bare, save where a few scraggy trees, evidently the worse for many a storm, were grouped around one end of it as if for shelter.

"Wonder why he called it the 'House of Fountains'?" remarked Snaggs, as we approached.

"Probably because there isn't a sign of a fountain near it," I rejoined, in a would-be-cheerful voice.

Involuntarily, I felt my spirits sink as I drew nearer. As Snaggs had said, there *was* something uncanny about the place. Not for worlds, however, would I have confessed the dislike I had to reëntering the house. Snaggs was not so reticent.

"I say, Fibbs," he said, as we scaled the garden wall—we both by tacit consent avoided the gate—"I wonder if there's an inn in the village? I have more than half a mind——"

"Now, Snaggs," I interrupted him, hastily, "you'll do nothing of the sort. Just imagine what a joke it would be for Vladimir if he heard that we could not stay for one night even in his blooming old villa! Don't be a fool! The rooms are delightfully comfortable, and I assure you, I think we are uncommonly lucky."

"Tastes differ," muttered Snaggs, as we slowly mounted the steps; "for me, I prefer less comfort and more stability."

"Dear me, Snaggs," I returned, impatiently, as we stood outside the door,

"just look at it now. Except for the table and the gate——"

"And the gong," put in Snaggs, with a shudder.

"—well, and the gong," I went on—"except for the table and the gate and the gong—and we'll get used to them—what's the matter with it? It's exactly like any other villa. Whinstone, I should say," I added, in a matter-of-fact tone as, glancing up at the tall, dark house, I tapped sharply with my stick against the wall. To my surprise, it emitted a loud, hollow, metallic sound.

"There, you see!" exclaimed Snaggs, as our eyes met. "It's no more whinstone than you are!"

Somehow, something in Snaggs's face and in the awestruck tone in which he said this sent me suddenly out of my nervous tremors into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, in which Snaggs, in spite of himself, presently joined. Before we had half recovered ourselves, the door swung open, we were enveloped in a flood of light, and Tranquillo, in his usual unexpected way, stood bowing so low before us that his gold fringes swept the ground.

Vladimir's smoking-room, into which we were presently conducted, was certainly the best apartment of the kind we had ever seen; his cigars, likewise, were the finest we had ever smoked, and his whiskey the best we had ever tasted. Can you wonder, then, that it was past midnight before we retired to rest, and that by this time we had heartily agreed that the advantages of our position far outweighed any slight inconvenience which might accrue to us from the freaks of an inventive genius?

I must have slept soundly for about an hour, I think, before I had that horrible dream. The gong was pursuing me down the road, while I, in frantic terror, lashed the zebra into a frenzied gallop. Again we neared the gate—as we had in reality done that afternoon. This time the gate did *not* open—the bars were right ahead—the zebra seemed to go through in

some miraculous manner, but my head came against them with a tremendous shock, which sent every drop of blood in my body back to my agonized heart. With a stifled shriek I awoke . . .

All was dark and still around me, but the pain in my head was real. I put up my hand to my brow. There was a bruise there, as sure as I was Fibbs.

Trembling, I groped for the matches on the table beside my bed.

Presently, I struck one and lighted a candle. Was I still dreaming, or was the ceiling of my room really within a few inches of my head as I sat up in bed? I rubbed my eyes, and looked again. Then I touched it with my hand. A kind of terror, born partly of the dream, partly of the awaking, fell cold and chill upon me. A remembrance of tales I had read of collapsible rooms and torture chambers rushed into my mind. For a moment, I could not move, and sat gazing up as though fascinated. It was evidently stationary now—but how long would it remain so? Breathing hard, I scrambled out of bed and, stooping down, made for the door of the room. Fortunately, it opened outward. The ceiling otherwise would have blocked it. In my fright, I had left the candle behind, and now found myself in the darkness of the hall. Turning hastily to where I knew the stair ought to be, I ascended several steps, lifted up my foot for the next and, finding none, fell in a heap on the floor. Crawling on for a yard or two, I felt about me in the dark. *There was no more stair!*

Back I went to my room and, seizing the flaring candle, returned to the hall. Sure enough, only about half the steps remained of the flight of the day before. The upper landing was within a few yards of the lower. There was Snaggs's door, however. I opened it, and immediately the strong draught blew out my candle. But the room was light. How did Snaggs's candle keep alight in such a wind? I glanced at his table—the candle was not lighted. Yet a cold, clear light flooded the room. Moonlight—but where did it come

from? The window-curtains were drawn. I glanced up—and my very breath forsook me. The roof was off! THE ROOF WAS OFF!!

For one blank second, I stood staring open-mouthed up at the square of windy sky, dotted with stars, from the midst of which the man in the moon, wreathed in fleecy clouds, looked down at me as though enjoying my discomfort. Then I rushed to the bed where Snaggs, calmly unconscious, was snoring loudly and peacefully.

"Snaggs!" I shouted, seizing his limp arm and giving it a violent shake. "Wake up this instant, Snaggs! The villa is going to bits, as sure as you're living!"

Snaggs always sleeps like a log. I could not wake him! As I, in desperation, was applying a wet sponge to his face, I thought I felt a tremulous motion through the room. I was too excited, however, to notice it, and presently Snaggs sat up, spluttering.

"What's the row?" he croaked, crossly, rubbing his eyes.

"Row!" I ejaculated, looking up—and then stopped short. The square of sky was gone—nothing was to be seen but the ordinary ceiling—the roof was *on* again!

"What d'you mean," raged Snaggs, "by waking up a fellow in the middle of the night for nothing?"

"Nothing!" I exclaimed. "Just you come and look at the stairway!"

"Well, what's the matter with the stairway?" growled Snaggs, as we reached the landing.

Well might he ask. There it was, just as it had been the day before. Not a thing was different.

"But, Snaggs," I gasped, "five minutes ago it was gone. There was only half of it there, I assure you, Snaggs!"

"Half a fiddlestick," retorted Snaggs, very wrath, preparing to return to his bed.

"But the roof of your room was off too, Snaggs!" I went on, in dire perplexity.

"Stuff and nonsense!" he snapped. "What are you talking about, Fibbs? Roof off! Bosh! There are some tiles

loose on your own pate, that's all. Go back to your bed, and don't you come waking me up again with your nightmares, or it will be the worse for you next time, that's all!"

I half thought it was a nightmare myself when I returned to my room, and found everything in its normal condition. Only when I looked in the glass, and saw a large green and blue bruise on the top of my forehead, was I convinced that it was no dream. I *had* bumped my head against the roof when I sprang up in my sleep.

Not feeling in the mood for bed, I dressed, and, getting out of my window, wandered about outside till morning. When I returned about six o'clock, I found Tranquillo, muffled up as usual, sweeping out the hall. What I could see of his face expressed not the slightest surprise, and though I did my best to explain the events of the night to him by means of the dumb alphabet and signs, he only stared blankly at me, apparently comprehending nothing.

"Stupid ass!" I cried, at length, in disgust. "You're automatic, too, I suppose, like everything else in this diabolical house!" His respectfully attentive attitude as he leaned on his broom was maddening. It was a relief to my irritated feelings to say out loud to his face what I thought of him, and, before I turned into the smoking-room, I miscalled him in pretty warm terms, only regretting that he was deaf.

IV

ROUSED from an uncomfortable nap on the sofa, some time later, by the sound of the gong, I wended my way into the dining-room for breakfast, expecting to find Snaggs there before me. No Snaggs appeared, however. The first thing that caught my eye was an untidy-looking note lying on my plate, addressed to me in Snaggs's well-known hand. It ran:

DEAR FIBBS:

I can stand automatic gates, even automatic gongs, but automatic beds I cannot

stand. My mattress has just curled up like a caterpillar, with me inside, and then, when I was within an inch of suffocation, the whole concern heaved up and pitched me to the other end of the room. From what I can gather from Tranquillo, it appears that it is an alarm bed, and had been set to four A.M. by the last occupant of the room. I put it to you, Fibbs, whether a human being with any self-respect could consent to remain for a single instant longer in a house where there are such goings-on. For my part, my Gladstone is packed, and by the time you get this I shall be far on the way to Dullton. There is a train from Slithering at seven o'clock. It is now half-past five. Though my bag is a good deal to carry, I shall have plenty of time to walk. No more zebras for me! Trusting to see you soon—alive,

Ever yours,
SNAGGS.

P. S.—I know now how you can get into the kitchen. You lean against the wall just inside the door of my room. Then look out, hold on to the bottom of the bed like grim death, mind your eye, and don't get giddy.

S.

Here was a nice state of things! Snaggs gone, leaving me alone with a deaf-mute, in a house the like of which I firmly believed had never before existed on the face of the earth. For some minutes, I contemplated the prospect in dismay; my mind was more than three-fourths made up to bolt like my companion; then pride—of which, mingled with obstinacy, I have no little store—came to my assistance.

"Snaggs may go," I said, aloud, as I tossed the note aside, and began upon the savory omelet which Tranquillo had placed before me. "As for me, I shall stay the week out, whatever happens."

Who laughed like that? It could not have been Tranquillo, for, when I looked around, he was staring placidly, with a far-away look in his eyes, at the opposite wall. Yet there was no one else in the room, or in the neighborhood, so far as I knew. I must have been mistaken, or perhaps it was the wind. It had risen to a gale outside. I was getting nervous—in the morning, too! This would never do. I drank a whole cup of boiling coffee at one draught, and felt much better.

The day, unlike the preceding one,

was wild and stormy. In spite of the rain, however, I went down to the beach. My head was aching, and I felt that the air would do me good. For some hours, I watched the great, white breakers dashing up on the rocks, and filling the air with spray, while screaming sea-gulls circled overhead, joining with reckless abandonment in the rollicking mood of the hour; then, soaking wet but much refreshed, I returned to the house, where a *recherché* luncheon awaited me.

The afternoon wore away. There were books in the smoking-room, and, selecting one, I settled myself on the sofa again, where I soon fell asleep, being quite exhausted with battling against the wind after the excitements of the preceding night.

No one disturbed my repose, until I was wakened with a start by the clanging-to of the gate outside. The smoking-room looked to the front. I sprang up and hastened to the window. I must have slept for a long time. Again the evening had come. So far as I could see through the rain-blurred panes, the storm had rather increased in violence. Black clouds, of all manner of strange, fantastic shapes, were being whirled across a wide expanse of dull, crimson sky. The scraggy trees among the shattered flower-beds moaned and creaked drearily in the wind, and beyond them, away in the misty distance, the sea lifted up its huge voice and howled.

As I said, I had been awakened by the clanging-to of the gate. The massive iron was still quivering on its hinges. Molto Tranquillo, astride the zebra, hat pressed down over his brows, long coat-tails and scarf-ends flying, had just passed through, and now the central figure of this weird landscape was making for the village at his usual break-neck pace, right in the teeth of the tearing hurricane. Once the zebra swerved aside as the pelting rain caught it in the eyes, but on they went again, and I watched them eagerly until, plunging over the brow of the hill, steed and rider were out of sight.

I was alone in the House of Fountains.

I must admit that it took me about a minute to make up my mind to turn away from the window into the darkening room. A feeling rather like terror took possession of me for that space of time. Then I faced around, and, stumbling over several chairs in the dimness, I reached the door and opened it. Instantly my mood changed. The hall was brightly lighted, and as I passed through it to the dining-room I drew a long breath of relief. What I had expected to find, I know not. What I did find was a very good dinner, not much the worse for waiting, to which I presently applied myself with vigor.

Among the large La France roses which garnished the centre of the table, in a silver bowl, there was a piece of crumpled paper. Looking closer I found it was Snaggs's note. I must have absently stuck it there in the morning. I read it again. The humor of the situation for the first time struck me, and I fairly roared with merriment.

"Poor old Snaggs!" I chuckled. "I don't wonder he didn't appreciate the alarm bed. He was a fool to go, though," I added, complacently glancing around. Then I noticed the postscript, and a new idea occurred to me.

The kitchen! Why should I not examine the kitchen? Tranquillo was out, probably gone on some errand to the village. He would not be back for some time. I was monarch of all I surveyed. I would explore the lower regions; Snaggs's directions did not, however, sound enticing. He had evidently found out the communication between the kitchen and his room by accident, but there must be other modes of ingress. Tranquillo at any moment might return, however. Whatever I was going to do, I must be quick about it.

The passage below-stairs was only provided with one small oil lamp, which gave out more smell than light, yet as I groped my way along I could

see that there were three good-sized doors in the wall, all painted a dull-brown color. Two of these I opened with care. The rooms they led into were quite uninteresting—one a commonplace washing-house, the other a well-stocked but very ordinary larder.

The third door, I hammered at in vain. It was the same that Snaggs and I had endeavored to open before, when the table disappeared. It was now, as it had been then, locked on the inside, but a red glow as of firelight came through the chink at the bottom, and through the noise of the wind I thought I could distinguish a crackling sound as of logs burning on the hearth. Doubtless, this was the kitchen, and the more I found I could not open the door, the more I became possessed by the desire to gain admittance.

Finding main force of no use, I consulted Snaggs's note again, repaired to his room, and followed his directions exactly. That is to say, I followed them exactly—all except the last. "Don't get giddy," indeed! I should like to know who would not have got giddy, finding himself, as I did, holding on by one hand to the bed-post, and hanging over a depth of some thirty feet or so, the wall against which he a moment before had leaned, having suddenly vanished, leaving only empty space behind.

However, there was the kitchen! And what a kitchen! I gazed first up at the ceiling, then down at the floor. The room was at least fifty feet high, quite the whole height of the villa, if not more, yet otherwise it was, on the whole, smaller than the average villa kitchen.

It certainly looked narrower, but that may have been because the walls, although three times the height of ordinary walls, were quite hidden from view by the heterogeneous crowd of utensils, etc., by which they were completely covered. Never have I seen so many frying-pans, stew-pans, jugs, kettles, dish-covers, rolling-pins, flat-irons and meat-choppers; besides

which there were shelves and shelves of jam-pots, and rows on rows of dishes, while up in the dimness of the raftered roof above me hung about sixty hams, brown and shining, interspersed here and there with long strings of onions.

A ladder, evidently made to reach to the highest shelf of this strange store-room, stood not far from the edge of the floor where I was—the vanished wall having apparently telescoped with that of the kitchen—and with some difficulty I managed to find a footing upon the steps.

In a few moments, I stood on the ground floor, right in front of a cheerfully-blazing fire.

There was very little furniture, only a large cooking-table, several good-sized barrels labeled "Flour," "Rice," etc., one chair, and a large assortment of brooms in one corner. As my eye wandered around, however, it fell upon the mantelpiece. There was nothing remarkable about it, certainly, except the amount of candlesticks crowded on its narrow ledge; but, on either side, the wall was dotted all over with curious little white handles, exactly like organ stops, each with something printed on it in clear black letters. "Dining-room Lever," "Blue Bedroom Lever," "Coupler with Out-door Apparatus," "Stair Contractor," "Niagara Douche," "Grand Foundation Hinge," etc.

Here, then, was the source of some, at least, of the mysterious vagaries of this disconcerting domicile; here the mechanism by which— But what was that?

My gaze was suddenly riveted on an oil-painting which seemed to be in a panel in the wall just above the mantelpiece—a curious face, half in shadow, with a mass of pale, straw-colored hair, gleaming blue eyes and a half-cynical, half-scornful smile about the corners of the mouth. Never have I seen such a portrait. It was Vladimir to the life! Half-startled and wholly fascinated, I hastily dragged the chair to the front of the fireplace, and, mounting upon it, leaned forward

to get a nearer view. As I did so, not thinking what I was doing, in my eagerness, I seized one of the little white handles in order to pull myself into position.

What followed is more easily imagined than described. I think for a second I must have been partially stunned. All I remember is turning a kind of somersault over the mantelpiece, while a confused mass of pots, pans, pickle-jars and loose flour descended in a terrific rattling avalanche upon my devoted head.

When I came to myself, the first thing I noticed was the little white handle, which, fool that I was, I had seized and still grasped convulsively with one hand. In a dazed way I looked at the words printed on it—"Semi-Inversion."

Then a light broke upon me, and stiffly I sat up. Yes, it was as I had thought. I was seated *on* the picture. The wall above the fireplace was now the floor, and what had before been the opposite wall was now the roof—with every shelf empty, and only one or two ladles still dangling here and there from the forest of crooked nails which speckled its surface!

What a scene it was! Never in my life have I beheld such a mess! Think of it! Think of all these things I have described tossed higgledy-piggledy, here, there and everywhere, in one wild, frantic conglomeration! It was like a bad dream, or the mind of a madman where nothing whatever is in its place. I think I must have been slightly mad myself at this moment, as, seizing a bunch of sausages which lay near, I flung it up in the air in a kind of insane enthusiasm, while I shouted, in a voice which I hardly recognized as mine:

"You've done it now, Fibbs, my boy! The whole bally villa's half upside down, and that's all about it!"

V

Was it, though? Heavens! What a smell! It was like brushes singe-

ing! All the brooms had fallen into the fire. I clapped my hand on the picture upon which I sat. It was burning hot. In a flash I had realized my position. I was right over the fireplace. I was on my feet in a twinkling. Stumbling and clattering through the litter which surrounded me, and hardly feeling how sore and bruised I was, I made for the hole in the wall by which I had entered. I might have known it. The whole place was full of firelight. I could see the wall quite well, but no hole was there. Probably the shock of the house falling had caused the wall to return to its former state. I could not even see where the opening had been. In dismay, I looked wildly around. The fire was spreading. Great tongues of flame were darting through the room. The mantelpiece had caught, and the chair would soon be a cinder. The place was full of smoke. Already, I was hardly able to distinguish anything for the tears streaming from my smarting eyes. The heat was becoming intense. I must get out of this at once, or be suffocated. Not a window was to be seen! Wrenching open my collar to give myself air, I caught sight of the door, and hope for a moment revived within me. Only for a moment, however, for what was the good of a door in the roof? Again, despair fell upon me, to be succeeded presently by a kind of frenzy. What a crackling there was! What a stench of burning pickles and jam! What a sputtering of painted wood! What a fizzing of ham! How the storm bellowed outside! And how my heart thumped within! If I could only get to that door! One side of the room, where there were wooden shelves, was already in full blaze. Madly, I climbed the other two in succession, only to find the door, which was in the centre, far from the sides, quite out of my reach. The fourth wall, formerly the floor of the room, being bare and smooth, was, of course, impracticable. The height was not great, only some twenty feet or so, but I could not reach it. Was I

going to choke? Stay, there was the ladder! One end of it was already burning. I couldn't help that. It was the last chance! Hauling it out from among the débris with a supreme effort, I reared it against the wall, and, pursued by clouds of smoke and flame, I scaled it like a racing monkey. What if the key should be gone? But no, there it stuck. With a shriek I seized it . . . the smoke caught my throat, and I coughed till I nearly fell from the ladder. Desperately, I twisted the key in the lock, and, turning the handle, with all my strength pushed the heavy door upward. Fortunately, like the other doors of the house, it opened outward, and must have been made for a contingency of this kind, for without much trouble on my part it fell back, in a second or two, almost of its own accord. Like a shot I was through, and not a moment too soon—as the draught of air caused by the opening of the door fanned the already furious blaze into a perfect tornado of flame.

Unless you have been in one, you can have no idea how confusing it is to find yourself in a house half-turned upside down—literally, I mean, not figuratively. How I got out of it and round to the front again, I am not quite sure. All I remember is a wild rush, a flying leap at the end of the passage, a tripping over pictures and hat-racks that lay in my path, a crash of the eight-day clock as my foot went through its face, a dash through the hall skylight which had now turned into a kind of horizontal French window, then dripping flower-beds, pulpy lawns, the garden wall and a whirl of wind and rain!

How queer the villa looked lying on its back! I could see it plainly by the light of the flames which were pouring out of the windows into the dusk. I had no time to look at it, however, for the gate clanged again close by and something striped whizzed past me in the semi-darkness. The zebra! Tranquillo had returned! An unreasoning horror of meeting the deaf-mute again completely overpowered me.

Flinging myself over the wall into the road—bruised, hatless, half-burnt as I was—I took to my heels, and ran as I hope never to run again. There was only one road—that to the station, and down it I flew. The gale was behind me, and once started I could not stop. On I went, faster and faster—down hill—up hill—through Slithering, where the dogs all barked at me, and the villagers, standing in groups discussing the fire on the height, followed me with hoots and yells—along the road between ghastly waving bushes, up to the ankles in mud, panting and half-dead—then, in a flash of dazzling lights, green, red and white, a fence to hold on by, and the railway station!

A train was drawn up at the platform. Blindly, I made for the nearest carriage. It was empty, and, stumbling to the furthest corner, I sank exhausted on the seat, and closed my eyes. A swirling gust blew the door to. No one was near, and I believed myself unnoticed. After some time the train started. I roused myself to fumble for my ticket, which, fortunately, together with my purse, was safe in my pocket. Judge of my surprise, when, glancing up, my eyes met those of Tranquillo calmly fixed upon me! He was seated at the other end of the carriage, and though, like myself, completely bespattered with mud, appeared perfectly comfortable and at his ease.

Involuntarily, I sprang up, but the train was going at full speed. There was nothing for it but to act the unconcern I did not feel. He was pointing through the window next to him. Following the direction of his finger, I could hardly believe my eyes when I beheld the house, which I had so lately left lying on its back and bursting with flames, standing with its scraggy attendant trees, black, erect and solemn against the lurid sky, exactly as it had been when first I saw it, save for the dense cloud of steam which was rising from it in thick white masses, and trailing out in quivering streaks along the wind to-

ward the west! Suddenly the train dived into a tunnel. I had looked my last on Vladimir's villa.

What a night that was! Sleeping or waking, Tranquillo's haunting eyes never left my face. When I changed carriages, he changed, too, and when I scowled at him, he took no notice. He made me feel a fool, and that I hate, and when, at the last junction before Dullton, having borrowed a hat and coat from a friendly station-master, I was doing my best to improve my personal appearance before arriving in my native vale in broad daylight, I could have kicked him for his constant, fixed, immovable stare.

Dullton at last! Hurrah! Who would have thought the day before yesterday that I could be so glad to be back? I rose. Tranquillo, too, rose. Surely he was not going to pursue me to my rooms? This was too much! I would not stand it—I—

But I need not have excited myself. Politely opening the door, Tranquillo allowed me to pass on to the platform; then, closing it again, let down the window and leaned out.

"Thank you—good-bye," I said, forgetting that he was deaf, of course. As I spoke I turned, and looked at him, straight in the face. A startling change had come over his appearance. The scarf which had hidden the scornfully smiling mouth was gone—the hair was straw-colored, *not* gray—the vacant eyes were brimming over with mischievous merriment—I now for the first time noticed that they were steely blue.

"Well, and how do you like my villa?" said the deaf-mute. "How do you like the House of Fountains? Rather good name—what? But rather bad pun. Good enough for you, though—'Fountains'—'Springs,' see? Ha! ha!"

"Vladimir!" I gasped, and then stood speechless, while peal after peal of derisive laughter was borne to me by the breeze in the wake of the departing train.

EPILOGUE

It was only a commonplace little waltz tune. Just the kind of thing one often hears between the acts of a play in the provinces. But a single violin was holding the melody, while the rest of the orchestra thrummed a soft accompaniment, and there was no doubt, as Snaggs said, that whoever was playing that instrument was a fiddler of far beyond the average merit.

There was something wild and strangely thrilling in the performance. Something grotesque, too, in the unexpected trills and twirls, quite out of keeping with the style of the music, which he introduced as if in mockery of the plaintive melancholy of the air. What the effect of it was I cannot describe, but, unmusical as I am, it made me hold my breath to listen, and I was not the only one. There was a silence throughout the whole crowded theatre in which you could have heard a fly sneeze.

The tune flickered, languished, paused—then swelled out for a moment in the full orchestra, and finally died in triumph amid a blare of trumpets and drums. As the curtain rose, Snaggs nudged me violently. He was pointing to the orchestra.

"Look there!" he whispered, in intense excitement.

The first violin was sitting with his face turned toward us. The light from the stage fell full on his blond head.

"No!" I exclaimed, "it can't be——"

"Vladimir—yes, it is!" said Snaggs, forgetting to whisper. "I might have known it from the first. None but Vladimir could have played like that!"

The people in front turned around and glared at us. We had to restrain our feelings until the end of the act. Neither of us, however, paid much attention to what was occurring on the stage. The treat, to which we had looked forward ever since, the week before, a theatrical friend of Snaggs's had presented us with a back-gallery ticket each, was completely lost upon us, so

much were we engaged in watching Vladimir.

When he gravely sent the man next him into suppressed fits of mirth, we, too, smiled inanely, out of sympathy with the unknown jest; when the orchestra played again, not a movement of his supple white hands escaped us, and even before the last curtain fell we were half-way down-stairs, in order to meet him at the artists' door on the way out.

"Hullo!" was all he said, when he saw us under a gas-lamp. He did not seem a bit surprised.

"What have you been doing with yourself all these eighteen months?" Snaggs burst out, "and why have you taken to fiddling again?"

"Dire necessity, my friend," said Vladimir, yawning. "Reason being," he added, carelessly, "the Count Michelowski is *not* dead, after all."

"Not dead!" we almost shouted.

Vladimir laughed.

"It's from him I inherit my taste for practical joking, you see," he said. "My respected uncle's demise, as well as his last will and testament, were really only one big hoax—a masterly pitfall for me. He wanted to see what I would do with his money, should it really be left to me. He gave me three years. Somehow, the result of the experiment was not favorable to my interests—and poof!—the million's gone, leaving nothing but the 'aire."

"Now, don't sympathize with me," he went on, as we were about to break in; "keep your condolences for those who need them! I have had my skip—I have had my fling, I have eaten my cake, and enjoyed it, too, every crumb. That's more than you will ever do, dear boys. Good night!"

"But the villa!" I shouted after him. "What has become of the villa?"

"Haven't you had enough of it?" he returned, with one of his brilliant smiles. "Then come to this address at six o'clock to-morrow evening. Ask for Mr. Vladimir. That is all my name now."

And tossing a card on the road in front of us, he turned on his heel, and strode whistling down a dark side-street.

We both had engagements for the next evening, but neither of us would have missed seeing Vladimir for the world. The address he had given us was a long way off, in a squalid part of the town. After considerable difficulty, we found the place on the top flat of a second-rate lodging-house. A clock was just striking six as we knocked at the door.

"Punctual to the minute!" said Snaggs, complacently.

We had to knock several times before the door flew open, and the cross-faced, slatternly landlady looked out.

"Is Mr. Vladimir in?" I inquired.

The woman's face lightened. "Oh, you've come to pay the lodgings?" she said.

"What lodgings?" said I, in dismay.

"We came to see Mr. Vladimir."

"Then you're late," she remarked,

unsympathetically. "Mr. Vladimir, as you call him, left two hours ago, but he said two gents would call at six o'clock to pay the lodgings, so here's the bill, and fork out quick, if you please!"

All that we could say was of no use, and, when she threatened to make a disturbance and call a policeman, we thought it best to give in. Loath of heart, we turned out our pockets. Our combined cash amounted to just a little over the sum required. What asses we felt as we went down the stairs!

"You've forgotten the receipt, sir!" called the landlady after us, "and, if you please, I was to tell you to look on the back."

Across the greasy, dirty paper was scrawled, in a well-known hand:

"One good turn deserves another. Think of your holiday in the House of Fountains."

Since then we have heard nothing—of either Vladimir or his villa.



IN NIGHT-TIME VALLEY

IN Night-time Valley there is always sleep,
Where lithe, white birches sway beside the stream

In slender whisperings

Of fabled woodland things,

* That fashion in the forest's cool, green deep

The fragile fabric of a lover's dream.

EMERY POTTLE.



DISASTER

MRS. HATTERSON—Poor Mrs. Dimpleton! She spent days in making a cozy corner for her husband.

MRS. CHATTERSON—What then?

"He sat down in it."

THE SEA OF DREAMS

A FLOAT and adrift on the Sea of Dreams,
 We two, we two together,
 In an idle boat adrift, afloat,
 Through all the Summer weather;
 In the silent night where the moonlight white
 And the pallid loadstar gleams,
 In an idle boat adrift, afloat,
 On the beautiful Sea of Dreams!

I wake—but the dream lives on for both
 We two, we two together,
 Held fast we seem by the foolish dream,
 Bound by the dream-strand's tether.
 Through the toiling day, in the fray alway,
 Though hid from the loadstar's beams,
 By the foolish dream held fast we seem
 On the foolish Sea of Dreams.

And I know some time we shall dream again,
 We two; we two together
 Shall sail, soul-free, the impossible sea
 Through all the Summer weather;
 Where the white surf breaks and the dreamer wakes
 And the pallid loadstar gleams,
 I shall come to you and the dream turn true
 By the beautiful Sea of Dreams.

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



COULDN'T KEEP COUNT

HEWITT—Does your wife make odd remarks?
 JEWETT—She makes so many of them that I can't keep count to see
 whether they are odd or even.



THE EXPLANATION

“HE says he moves in the best society.”
 “So he does; he owns a furniture van.”

THE MARQUIS IN HIS GARDEN

By Gardner C. Teall

I N his river garden, where deliciously fragrant thorn-flowers breathed their perfume to the rippling waters of the Charente, the Marquis de Sainte-Croix found himself whiling away the passing hour, thanking his stars that at last he had succeeded in escaping monsieur, the Abbé Frichétout, for the enjoyment of an uninterrupted survey of this particular nook of his estate, this garden so dear to his heart. The marquis was passionately fond of flowers, and the Ophelia-like manner in which he affected them was audacious and independent. At the moment, a little chain of daisies encircled his collar of *point de Flandre*, another in the making exacted his attention, and a sprig of crimson blossoms gave a jaunty touch to his cap. Though the making of daisy chains was not inconsistent with the exertions of those persons set down in the *caste nobiliaire* of his time, yet the Abbé Frichétout, being a man of mind, presumed to be sarcastic with the marquis shortly before, in the expressing of something disagreeably like the proposition that the *progrès intellectuel* and the *maladie pour avoir les chaînettes de fleurs* were quite apart, one from the other.

Now, the marquis was often accused of density, but in this instance he penetrated the affront sufficiently to conclude that the abbé was bearish, and to wish that it were not necessary, for prudent reasons, to put up with him. He had learned, long ago, the futility of arguing with him—occasionally, he even doubted his balance; that is why he refrained, and when the troublesome abbé turned away to go and fetch

a book which he insisted it would delight *monsieur le marquis* to hear read by himself, why, the marquis, knowing the only way to shake a bore is to give him the slip, slipped. The marquis was impetuous.

Down the box-bordered path, along the iris-fringed riverside, strolled the marquis. Then, passing the first hedge, he brought himself up to the stone wall, and stood there under a declining almond tree. At that moment, a voice from the other side startled him agreeably by its thrilling sweetness, and he listened.

"Make haste, Annette. It was stupid in you to forget it. I shall rest here."

The marquis held his breath. If he retreated she might hear him, and be frightened away before he could reach the break in the hedge. As for the walk, it was far too high to permit anything but guesswork, but, being boldly romantic, he clambered up nimbly, and, from his coign of vantage, peeped down on as fair a creature as ever had given his noble eyes delight.

"*Sacré nom!*" cried the lady, surprised and frightened. Her profanity led the marquis into the conjecture that she also was of the noblesse, and undoubtedly out from Paris.

He pulled off his cap respectfully, the sprig of blossoms falling at her feet as he did so.

"I frightened you?"

"But yes—frantically," she declared.

"I am the Marquis de Sainte-Croix," he explained. She seemed to consider that an apology sufficient. "And you?" His bluntness might have dis-

posed another to confusion and flight; not so with the marquis's discovery.

"I? Oh, I am the Princess Mikkevetch," she replied.

"Ah!" commented the marquis. "It is quite like a fairy tale, then."

"Quite!" And she turned her dimpled face toward him. He jumped down, much impressed. She only smiled more sweetly.

"Ah, but you are very beautiful, my princess!" he blurted, without the slightest attempt at diplomacy in his *galanterie*.

"You think so?"

"I have never seen one more beautiful. I shall kiss your cheek."

The demureness with which the princess accepted this declaration, in a delicious little sigh, was an encouragement for which even the boldness of the marquis could scarcely have hoped.

"You have melted my heart, princess," said he; "you are the sun of my happiness."

An unexpected discretion forced the princess to regret that Annette might return at any moment. Inwardly, the marquis cursed Annette; outwardly, he inquired:

"Annette? She is your friend?"

"But no," the princess answered, "my maid!"

The marquis comprehended, and climbed back on the wall. She laughed at his chagrin.

"Are you angry?" he asked, perplexedly.

"I? But no—I—I am not at all angry." The marquis jumped down again.

She looked furtively toward the path. "You are not wise," declared she; "it may be Annette, or it may be the Vicomtesse d'Irlé, whom we visit, or it may be any one, and then——"

The marquis was moved by her entreaty, and regained his eminence, whence he threw her a kiss of acknowledgment. The agility of his retreat threw the princess into trepidation.

"Is it that you see Annette?" She pouted, after making quite sure that it was not Annette. Perhaps the marquis was not so courageous, after all.

"No, my princess," he stammered, looking over his shoulder through the branches of the almond-tree, as the color mounted to his brow.

"Then you are tired of me? Is it that?" she demanded, almost in anger.

"Ah, no!" he declared, lowering his voice; "not that—and we shall meet again." His uneasiness became ridiculous, then sentimental. "And I shall love you always." He threw to her the gold buckle which he slipped from the band of his cap.

The princess was comforted. "I shall keep it always," said she. "And this happens also to be my birthday."

"Ah!" The marquis was surprised into an unfair inflection, but the princess was good-natured.

"Yes, to-day I am nine."

"And I, I am eleven," he replied.

At that moment, a thundering voice from the marquis's side of the wall caught them in their confidences. "*Monsieur le marquis*," it demanded, "why did you slide away? What are you doing on that wall?"

"I— *Monsieur l'abbé*, I am playing *les Alpes*!" At least, the princess should escape.

"*Descendez!*" roared the irritable Frichétout. Breathlessly, the princess listened to the scrambling on the other side, but her composure returned at the sound of retreating footsteps, when, low with humiliation and under the surveillance of *monsieur l'abbé*, the marquis passed out of his garden.



A LATTER-DAY REPLY

HE—I'd give up all my millions to have you.
SHE—If you did, you wouldn't have me.

THE MODEL BALLAD OF THE COOK AND THE CLAIRVOYANT

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

MISS MARGARET MACNAMARA was a cook from the Emerald Isle
Who landed from Cork in the town of New York with a trunk and a
fatuous smile,
And sat for ten days, without daring to raise her eyes, in the stolid, demure row
Of what people call, for no reason at all, a high-grade intelligence bureau.
In a neighboring room was an unemployed groom, who had lately come over
from Norway,
And, smitten with ardor, stared harder and harder each minute at her through
the doorway.
Fate has curious turns—(almost every one learns that we cannot expect to
avoid them)—
And it settled the doom of the cook and the groom, for the very same person
employed them!

Now this was a chance for a kitchen romance such as one doesn't frequently
find.
She distanced most cooks in the matter of looks, and the groom, by the way,
wasn't blind.
While she worked on a patty, he used to get chatty, and while he was cleaning
the knives,
She'd appear with bare arms—not the least of her charms—and jolly him up
about wives.
When dinner was finished, and labor diminished, they took their chairs out in
the area,
And she, without stint, would drop hint after hint, while he only grew all the
warier.
Still, as all women do, she supposed he was true, and her heart it most terribly
tore
When she found out one day he was getting too gay with a chambermaid living
next door.

The heart-broken Bid her discovery hid, and applied herself calmly and meekly
To searching for hints in her favorite prints, which were left at the lower door
weekly:
Till she happened one day in a casual way to find an escape from annoyance,
When she struck half a column of balderdash solemn that dealt with the art of
clairvoyance.
So she put on her cloak, left the carrots to soak, set the kettle well back on the
stove,
And with hastening feet set off for the street where lived the astrologer cove.
He received her in state, without making a date, and he hitched with his thumb
at his collar,
And remarked, "Before we go ahead there's a fee." And he modestly added,
"A dollar."

His speech it was suave, and his costume zouave, and his manner than lather
was soapier,

And he wore on his head a yellow and red affair like a big cornucopia.

He shuffled a pack of cards with a knack that showed he was no amateur,
Dealt a red and black queen, with a knave in between, and expounded her fortune to her.

Then he sold her a lotion, and also a potion, the first one to make her more
beautiful,

And the second to be put in any one's tea whom she wished to make loving and
dutiful.

He sent her away feeling happy and gay, though in candor I'm bound to assert
he

With an innocent look had buncoed that cook out of something like four dollars,
thirty.

The lotion she spread in the way he had said all over her ruddy complexion,
And instead of her dimples some two hundred pimples came out in 'most every
direction.

When they sat down to sup, she put in the cup of her lover the wizard's emulsion,
And the agonized groom flopped all over the room in a highly dramatic convulsion.

And early next morning her victim gave warning—it seems he was horribly
vexed.

He thought from her simples—and also her pimples—she might break out
anywhere next!

He said to her face that he'd found a new place where risks he'd not run any
more.

And that was on Monday—the following Sunday he married her rival next
door.

THE MORAL is highly distressing, but of it one cannot get rid:

You frequently can get a bid for a man when you can't get a man for a Bid!



SAME RESULT

“HELLO! you don't mean you're really married, old man? So you've at
last met the girl of your choice, eh?”

“I don't know about that—but I've met the girl whose choice I was.”



COULDN'T HELP SHAKING

ELLA—Fred shook terribly when he proposed to me.

STELLA—I didn't know that he was diffident.

ELLA—I don't think he is; we were in an automobile when he proposed.

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE HUNDRED, SIXTY AND NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON, SHEM, IN REGARD TO WOMEN

By Gelett Burgess

MY SON, harken unto my words, and attend diligently to my counsel, for the world is full of women, and the women full of wile; so that a man, if he go not warily withal, shall fall a prey thereto.

2 For, in the endeavor to misunderstand women, we spend our most *delightful* moments.

3 Take heed and know that a *fond* woman's commandment is made to be broken, and only a fool erreth therein.

4 When she smileth, peradventure it may be for others; yet when she scowleth it is for thee alone.

5 If she talketh much of another, rejoice that thou hast no rival, but if she keepeth silence *concerning him* watch thou his actions, for danger lieth in wait.

6 If she weepeth, weep thou also, *and her grief shall be abated.*

¶7 Many a woman hath said unto me; Lo, I am the universal confidante, and all men tell me their loves; yet have I not confided in her.

8 If a woman importune thee for thy secret, lie thou straightway, for *words* will suffice her.

9 Yet if she cease straightway from questioning, then mayest thou tell her the truth.

10 My son, beware of a plain woman who charmeth thee, for the fair maiden is simple of heart, but the plain damsel needeth much wile, and useth many weapons.

¶11 Doth a woman strive for the impossible? Nay, she knoweth not the gain thereof, and she scoffeth at him who reacheth for a marvel.

12 She deemeth better the bird in the hand than two *in the bush.*

13 Make thou a statement concerning women, and behold, she shall *immediately* try to prove thee the contrary.

14 And impression she nurseth, while expression she curseth.

15 Yet will her heart show itself at the window of compassion when it will not enter the door of pleasure.

16 When a woman renounceth love, she entereth and shutteth the door after her, but when a man slayeth his hope, he shutteth the door after him, but he departeth.

¶17 Son, heed my wisdom and follow my ways and much shall be granted thee;

18 Many a woman have I won with a quarrel, when flattery was in no wise helpful; do likewise, but see that thou art in the wrong, that thou mayest acknowledge thine error.

19 Repeat not the method of a flirtation, for lo, all the world will hear of it and women taunt thee, even the *débutante* will revile thy steps.

20 A poem to the foolish and a jest to the wise; a kiss to the chaste and a handclasp to the unchaste.

21 A woman is like a fort in a strange land, easy to capture but hard to hold.

¶22 I say unto thee, verily eschew competition, for if she loveth another more than thee, naught of *thy doing* will vanquish a rival.

23 While thine arm is about her, let it be as if other women were not. Mention them not, nay, ignore them utterly.

¶24 Son, observe woman *and her ways*, and be not deceived by false tidings;

25 She liveth ever in a romantic future, but man in the present.

26 Her heart consenteth before her lips say, yea, and in this interval lieth Paradise, wherefore she would prolong it.

27 She sayeth, lo, I have washed mine hair, and I can do nothing with it; *this is the time for compliment.*

28 She sendeth a telegram of ten words; nor more nor less can she be persuaded though her need be great.

29 She watcheth the raiment of *other women* on the street; in the house she watcheth their actions, and remembereth them.

30 She is the most virtuous of women who hath kissed and hath ceased her kissing. She is impregnable and there is none like unto her.

¶31 For at the window of my house, I looked through my casement,

32 And beheld a table spread, with men and women sitting at meat thereat;

33 And behold, every woman flirted with her neighbor, and the men flirted with them; two and two they flirted until coffee was served. And I regarded them.

34 And every woman watched the *other women* privily, and made note of their progress, who were in love and who were in boredom and who quarreled, withal.

35 Out of the corners of *their eyes* they observed all things that were doing at the table, but they made no sign.

36 But behold, the men were as blind; each man regarded his neighbor and none other; he attended each to his own affair, he looked straightly, not regarding the others at the table.

37 And behold, *coffee was served*, and the women left the men, going up to their apartment and to the mirrors thereof.

38 And the women gossiped privily of the men, and taunted each other withal. *And they waited.*

39 But the men smoked together at their ease, and talked one to another of many things.

40 But no man talked of the women in the house, nor of another's flirting. And the time passed merrily, none desiring to leave the table.

¶41 My son, I have regarded the ways of a man with a maid, and his acts are the doings of a fool in his folly.

42 He falleth in love, his heart is moved, he desireth her to wife, but she leadeth him away from proposing; with many wiles, she steereth him away;

43 And the fool thinketh in his heart, lo, I am cured of my folly; behold I am a man and the woman tireth me, I have put her away from my mind, my heart is weary of her;

44 She marryeth, and he saith, how luckily am I preserved, yet my will hath triumphed, I was wise and eschewed her.

¶45 My son, say not unto a woman, beloved, why love I not thee, for thou art fair, thou hast dove's eyes;

46 For her heart shall sicken at thy words, and two thoughts shall come unto her, aye, two things shall persecute her in her meditations;

47 She shall say, if he loveth me not now, he will *never* love me;

48 And, It is *my* fault, for I should have made him love me.

49 For witful men make their love in the same wise; one like unto another;

50 With witty jest and with open frankness, *showing their wounds*,

51 Beginning at the end and working backwards.

52 A woman findeth in her lover much of her first love alway, but a man seeth his last love only.

¶53 And I came upon a pair, kissing; of a sudden I found them unaware, and I marveled;

54 For the woman was bold as a lion with her whelp, but the man was ashamed.

55 And I spake unto the damsel, saying, wherefore art thou not ashamed, and why dost thine heart beat not?

56 And she answered, saying, lo, when he first kissed me, then was I ashamed and my heart beat strongly, and I held down my head;

57 But now it is over, I have succumbed, my heart hath surrendered.

Can one lose all twice? In that day I was ashamed, and of my defeat; what worse can befall me?

¶58 My son, heed my instruction, and apply thyself to know wisdom; let thine eyes observe her when she is with another.

59 Count no woman wise till thou

hast received her letter, but love none till thou hast seen her face to face.

60 Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that offereth to mend thy glove shall be praised.

61 Woo her not till thou hast seen her mother, for a score of years worketh marvelous things.



WHEN ABDUL HAMID GOES TO PRAYER

WHEN Abdul Hamid goes to prayer,
Six thousand troops are gathered there,
Gathered there, in the rain and the wet,
No matter how they fume and fret,
No matter how they fuss and swear,
Abdul Hamid goes to prayer.

When Abdul Hamid goes to prayer,
Six thousand voices rend the air:
"Long, long life, to the great Sultan!"
You'd almost think him a lucky man,
But a sultan's life is full of care,
So Abdul Hamid goes to prayer.

When Abdul Hamid goes to prayer,
Five proud youngsters marching there,
Broad of shoulder and strong of arm,
Guard their father from hurt or harm,
Noble sons who can do and dare,
So Abdul Hamid goes to prayer.

When Abdul Hamid goes to prayer,
All of his wives are never there,
Because they number a score and seven,
The score of his children!—that's in heaven.
Why crowd the mosque, as the people stare,
When Abdul Hamid goes to prayer?

When Abdul Hamid goes to prayer,
A serious face his pashas wear;
His eunuchs strike for a purse of gold
And the tale of the sultan's life is told.
For the pauper's peace and frugal fare,
Abdul Hamid goes to prayer.

JAMES CLARENCE HARVEY.

LOVE'S AWAKENING

WITHIN the garden, when the thrush
 In golden strains the morning broke,
 And thrilled to song the waiting hush—
 Among the roses, Love awoke.

There was a dream within his eyes,
 An untold joy housed in his heart,
 And in his smile the glad surprise
 Of secrets that the winds impart.

He breathed the Springtime's sorcery,
 The sun pulsed through his veins like wine;
 Ah, was it chance he turned to see
 Life passing by? With skill divine,

Wild music from the thrush he wrung,
 And stole the rose's garnered sweet,
 Then, pleading for her kiss, he flung
 His pilfered treasure at Life's feet!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



ITS USUAL STATUS

THE KID (*who has an inquiring mind*)—Pa, this word "agog"? We read
 so often about society being agog, you know. Is society always agog, pa?
 His DAD—No, my son; a great deal of the time it is a gag.



IN ROSE TIME

THE fairest roses do not grow
 In June's sweet month of grace;
 The winds of Winter make them blow
 Upon my lady's face!

PAUL WEBSTER EATON.

THE LUCK OF THE DOLANS

By Louise Herrick Wall

THE woman on the platform of the electrical machine had just spoken, and turned, laughing, to look at the doctor who stood behind her, spraying her with the brass wand. Sparks leaped from her toward his moving hand, and flecks of blue light sparkled and sputtered across from bulb to bulb on the rod of the static machine in front of her. The air was strong with the tallowy smell of the liberated ozone; loose threads of her hair stood straight out from her brilliant face.

The man hooked the wand on the rack beside the machine, and, coming around in front of his patient, stared at her intently. Then he said:

"I would give five thousand dollars down, to see how nature can have adjusted herself so marvelously. Krantz, the man I studied under in Germany, has done the operation several times, and I used his technique; but none of the German cases made such a recovery as you have made, and the thing has not been tried in this country, so far as I know, and certainly not in San Francisco. But the marvel of it is your absolute recovery. Why, look at you!" he cried, picking up a hand-mirror from his instrument-case, and holding it up toward her. "No, don't touch it; you'll get a shock. There, I'll stop the machine. It's nonsense to give you electricity, or anything else. I never saw such health."

The padded rub of the generating wheels slowed, and the sparkling died off. The woman's hair dropped into place, as she bent forward to see herself in the glass.

She was a superbly vigorous crea-

ture, and must have been born of life at full tide. Her unshadowed good looks hit you hard, and at once. She was like a modern portrait that has been over-varnished; there was no mystery, no half-tones. Over her ears, the hair stood out in rough masses of deep color; but on her forehead the short, reddish-black hairs whirled themselves into a flat, curled forelock, as on the forehead of a young bull.

"I *am* rather a success, physically," she said, without coquetry, turning her head from the mirror and stepping down from the platform, with a look of preoccupation gathering on her face.

"How you wish I had died!" she continued. "How you wish it had been one of those perfectly successful operations, where the patient lives for two or three weeks and then, quite on her own account, dies of heart-failure! Then you could have looked inside and discovered what nature did where you left off. But, you see, I couldn't die. I would have died of the accident, if I had been that kind. I got well like this because I have always been sound, all through. It wasn't as if I had been an unhealthy sort of creature. Except for that injury I might have lasted forever. I think it's the body that's the immortal part of me. I put up such a good fight because I was fit; that was my gain, and it was your loss. That's the way with most games. But you can't deny that you wish I had blamelessly died."

The surgeon shrugged his shoulders irritably, and moved toward his desk.

"I have not said so," he answered.

"No, because doctors don't say

they want people to die," she retorted. "But I am not just talking, as you seem to think. I'm thinking, I'm thinking hard."

She had seated herself in the consulting chair, facing the light, and she motioned him to take his place at the desk. She had picked up her gloves, a long, limp pair of black suède, and was drawing them slowly through her hand, enjoying their softness, though her mind was not on it.

"I have a business offer to make you," she said, "and so you must spare me time. I was born out here in gold-fever days. My father was a miner and a gambler, and I am the same. He was Tim Dolan. He struck it rich in '67, and in '69, and in '73; and lost his pile on cards, in the even years. I saw my mother once. She was old then, and I made up my mind I would rather make my money like my father. I am like him, anyhow. You men think that it's women of my physique that make the bad sort, but that's where you miss it. I've thought about it, and I know how it is. We healthy women have got too much of the honest brute left in us for that, and there isn't an animal of the lot that submits to things like your civilized woman. It's the fine-haired women that queer themselves, because they work on their imaginations with ideas, and brace themselves against insults by thinking of rewards; that's what makes martyrs—and the other sort, too. Now, ideas don't count for much with healthy women; not against reality, anyhow. There isn't much submission in us, for good or for bad. We take our risks in life, and do as we choose, like the men. That's all I ask."

The man's small, trained eyes were fixed on the woman. She fronted him at her ease, like a player who holds, but still withholds, the cards.

"This is not business. What I was going to say is that I will close with that offer of yours for five thousand, and give you a mortgage. I won't pay interest in the meanwhile, but you can foreclose at the end of two years, if I haven't returned the principal, doubled."

She leaned back, and watched him; then, throwing her head up, laughed a full-throated little laugh.

"Don't you take me? With your five thousand I'll go to the Klondike. It's the chance I've been waiting for since I was born. It's the odd year, too, the Dolans' good-luck year. There's never been a real strike before, since I was big enough, and this time I'm going in to win. Five thousand is just about right. In two years you'll either get your money back, doubled, or I'll give you a chance to give science a lift. Mortgage, mortgage; isn't that what the word means, anyhow?"

"What rot!" the man cried, springing to his feet and flinging his chair back, intense disgust and anger on his face.

"You were bluffing, then?" said Nora Dolan, rising coolly and facing him. "You would not give five thousand to know?"

"Yes, I would, for the knowledge decently come by; but this isn't a shop where women sell their souls to the devil."

"Oh, no!" she said, laughing easily, and thrusting her hand into one of her long gloves; "not so bad as that. We are too modern to talk of soul and devil; this was a case of science and body." She nodded to him, took up her parasol, and left the room.

The next morning this letter was in Dr. Kramer's mail:

SAN FRANCISCO, July 30, 1897.

DEAR SIR:

Your cheque for five thousand dollars (\$5,000) in favor of Miss Nora Dolan, was cashed by us yesterday, although the amount slightly overdraw your deposit. We are writing to call your attention to the small over-draft.

Thanking you for past courtesies, we remain,

Yours very truly,
J. K. WILSON.

New Bank of California.

The only other letter in the mail was this:

PALACE HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO,
JULY 20, 1897.

DEAR DR. KRAMER:

Thanks for the grub-stake. I took you up, and did your signature to-day. In '99,

then, you will hear from me. The Dolans are honest, and lucky—on the odd years. I sail for Alaska to-night.

Your grateful patient,
NORA DOLAN.

It was in September, 1899, that Nora Dolan came back to San Francisco, on the last boat out that season. She sailed from Saint Michaels on *The Mascot*, that slipped the "Arctic ice-trap" with eight millions in flakes, nuggets and dust. The night they made the Farallones was unusually warm for the California coast. What was left of a moon hung high above the noise on the deck of *The Mascot*, where the boys talked of "hitting the trail for home." They sang, laughed and yarned, while the thin, sweet whisper of a guitar in Dick O'Hara's lap murmured:

We're coming home again,
No more to roam again,
We're coming, coming home,
No more again to roam,
We're coming home again.

Among the men sprawled the sleek, black huskies—dog by mother, wolf by father—that had also come out alive and were waxing fat. Suddenly the "Montana Kid," a runaway freshman from Berkeley, began to chant, in the college sing-song, "We—want—Nora! We—want—Nora!" Others took it up, "We want Nora—*quick!*"

"Oh, give us time!" she called from the cabin. "I'm not a lightning-change artiste." And then she came out to them, wearing a Spanish dancing-dress of black, with a short skirt, and over her deep-colored hair a heavy wreath of California poppies, of gauzy orange silk.

The men stamped and cheered—all except old Dupay. He had been in the Klondike twelve years, and he sat, dull-eyed, with his sack of dust—an eighty-pounder—at his feet. She came forward among them, laughing with their delight, and looking the splendid spirit of success—the reincarnation of '49.

"Shall I dance Spanish first?" she cried, lifting her arms, from which

the open sleeves fell back, leaving them suddenly white and bare. The guitar lifted its sweet, weak voice in the fandango, and she dropped her arms, and her whole body drooped toward them in a deep, languid obeisance, down and down, until the poppy-buds tumbled forward and shadowed her eyes. Then she rose, a gradual, buoyant lift, as when a boat rides the top of a great swell, and, tossing back the flowers from her eyes, she laughed again and spread out her arms in the night air, as though she swam in the warm moonlight.

When she had swept the boys the last deep bow, they yelled, and nuggets pecked the deck at her feet.

"Quit that, boys!" she cried, angrily. "Do you think I'll put them in my stocking like a Dawson City song-and-dance girl? Rake 'em in, every last one! You wouldn't have done that to a man that was doing his stunt for you, and women aren't always out after the stuff."

She turned from them shortly, and went into the cabin. Presently, she came out in her morning dress.

"Are you mad, Nora?" ventured Swiftwater Bill.

"Don't you worry," she said, cheerily, and sat down by old Dupay.

"Oh, Nora is like a day on the Chil-koot Pass. You get one ear blistered by the frost and t'other by the sun," said the Kid.

Dick O'Hara, on the other side of her, crossed his legs and leaned over toward her; on his boot was the clay dirt of Bonanza Creek. "Say, Nora," he said, very low, "I couldn't want you any harder if you was the last can of milk on my side of the Pass—sure. If you want to marry me, any time, just say the word."

"My friend," she said, with robust contempt, "I am not that kind."

"No! Well, here's my sack, without marrying." It was a small sack.

She laughed more kindly. This was less offensive. "You're up against it again, Dick; I'm not that kind, either."

"I'm damned if I know what kind you are!" he said, gloomily. "Will you come over there and let me talk to you some?"

They crossed the open deck-space, the boys looking after, and stood by the rail.

"Why won't you take me? For God's sake, don't say no!"

"I don't want to; and, anyhow, I'm too much mortgaged to close a sale." She spoke half-jestingly.

"Owe money?"

"Yes; ten thousand to Dr. Kramer, in San Francisco."

"I haven't got it, Nora," he said, remorsefully.

"Oh, I know that. That's why I told you."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll see the man to-morrow," she said, evasively. "You see, I was sure I'd win out this trip." She gave a little shiver, laughed, and then lifted her face to the sky, and took a great breath of the warm, sweet night. "Oh, well," she said, "to-night is to-night, and to-morrow—may be heaven, for all we know."

He threw back his head, too, and brought his heavy hand down on the rail. "To-night is heaven, if you would only like me!" he cried, with a burst of feeling.

"Then pretend I do, Dick, but remember that I don't," she said, almost tenderly.

He lifted his bold face once more to the sky. "Ain't the moon neat?" he cried, with enthusiasm, seeing it for the first time that night.

Nora went to her cabin early, and wrote and rewrote a letter that, after all, covered only a half-sheet. It was carefully worded, and ran:

DEAR DR. KRAMER:

I am sorry that there seems no pleasant way to do this; but I hope you will not have much trouble with the coroners, etc. They must see that I did it myself. I did want my own doctor to make the autopsy. It is my only wish.

I lost everything in the Klondike that I had. I started in too late in '97, and so got caught in the ice, and did not get to Dawson until the next year—the even year.

Because I'm cleaned out, and because I

like big risks and quick returns, I have taken the short route. Don't you fret. It was a square deal. *Adios.*

Yours sincerely,

NORA DOLAN.

When she lay down to sleep the moon had set. It was very dark and cheerless, but she could still hear voices of men playing the "only game."

Two hours after *The Mascot* was warped in and tied up to the wharf at San Francisco, the trained nurse at Dr. Kramer's office was saying to Nora, "It's a quarter of an hour until the doctor's office hours begin."

"That's all right. I'll wait in the private office. Tell him to see me as soon as he comes in, please." She smiled, and the nurse let her pass.

Inside, she took the pins from her big hat, ran her fingers through the flat curl on her forehead, and placed upon the doctor's desk the note she had written the night before; then, changing her mind, she put it in front of the mantel clock.

A light knock startled her. The nurse came in, saying: "I forgot to take the name."

"Dolan—Miss Nora Dolan."

The other looked surprised.

"Then this is for you, Miss Dolan," she said, stepping back into the next room for a second, and returning with an old canvas pouch and a sealed letter. She lingered a moment, but as Nora stood waiting for her to go, she closed herself out.

"Here is the dirt for the doctor," the note began; and it went on to say that the night before Dick O'Hara had had the devil's own luck at poker.

"Cards!" said the heir of the Dolans, incredulously.

Dick ended by saying: "I played for you last night. You brought the luck, and so it belongs to you."

She dropped the sheet with a little shaken laugh, and covered her eyes with her hand.

"I thought I was better grit," she half-groaned. "I guess I'm just a woman—just a regular, ordinary woman. But to-day is to-day, and to-morrow—I'll look up Dick."

FALSE PROPHETS

By Owen Oliver

LORD MARCHESTER entered the long breakfast-room from the north, and Miss Drake from the south. He bowed, and sauntered out by the French window. She bowed, and left hastily by the corridor. They ran into each other at the corner of the conservatory. He muttered, "Er—!" and stepped aside. She exclaimed, "Oh!" and stepped back. He pretended to let her pass, and she pretended to pass him. Then their eyes met, and they stood still.

"Let's have it out," she proposed, throwing her head back, defiantly. There was a look of old "Dogged Drake" about her, and his lordship's eyes kindled, approvingly.

"Thank you," he said, warmly. "That's what *I* wanted to say. Shall we go on the veranda? The others won't be down for twenty minutes."

They went on the veranda accordingly. He sat on the pedestal of a plaster lion, and she swayed to and fro in a rocking-chair. They glanced at each other doubtfully several times. Each time they smiled a little more. At last they laughed, and he took out a cigarette, and lighted it.

"I say, Miss Drake, *we're* all right. It's the others."

"Especially the mothers. I suppose Lady Marchester has been talking to you about me?" He nodded, with a grimace. "My mother has been talking to *me*—about you."

"Exactly," he agreed.

"My mother has reminded me that your father is a lord. It's your turn."

"My mother has reminded me that

your father is a millionaire. It's your turn, Miss Drake."

"I'd rather you said it," she confessed.

"Well—er—the fact is—er—they want us to marry each other." He spread out his hands deprecatingly, and she bent forward, eagerly.

"And we don't want to," she cried. Her cheeks were prettily pink.

He puffed his cigarette, thoughtfully.

"It would be a great honor to me, of course," he said, "if—er——"

"If *I* wanted to! It would be a great honor to me if you wanted to. We've such bad taste that we don't—Now, we'll take the pretty things as said."

He took the cigarette out of his mouth, and blew a trail of smoke very slowly.

"You're going to let me be frank with you, aren't you? It wasn't just a pretty speech. I like you very much, as a friend."

She tied a knot in her handkerchief, and examined it with her head on one side. The pose became her.

"Cut the knot," he suggested, in a quiet voice—the voice of a man who is too strong to bluster.

She smiled at him, suddenly.

"I am going to let myself be frank, too. I like *you*—as a friend."

"That's the nicest thing I have heard for a long time." There was a sincere ring about the speech.

"Unfortunately, our friendship would certainly be misconstrued. So we have no choice in the matter."

He crossed his legs, and leaned back against the plaster lion.

"I have no choice. *You* have."

She considered with her elbow on the arm of the chair, and one finger-tip on her cheek.

"I see. It doesn't matter to a man what people say. It does to a woman. So you are not concerned in the choice?"

"I am very much concerned, but I haven't to choose."

"And I have to choose—what?"

"Whether my friendship is worth the misconstruction."

"Oh, you see"—she looked up at him, innocently—"I don't know what your friendship is worth."

He threw the cigarette away, and leaned forward, with his big hand outstretched.

"Take a sporting risk," he proposed, with a big, honest laugh. "I'm not so bad!"

She half held out her hand, then hesitated.

"It would be easier for me," she said, "if I knew your view of the matter."

"With pleasure! You are the only person worth chumming with here. You are worth chumming with anywhere. I want to chum with you."

She laughed, brightly.

"Then—you can put the same down to me."

She held out her hand, and his hand swallowed it.

"The more friendship, the more misunderstanding," he said. "Shall we do it thoroughly?"

"Of course! It will serve them right. What fun it will be to see our mothers looking at each other, and nodding, and prophesying. There's the breakfast bell. Come and pledge me in tea."

"We will drink," he said, "to the false prophets."

II

LORD MARCHESTER entered the conservatory from the garden, and Miss Drake from the drawing-room, where some one was playing a waltz on the piano. He seized her, and whirled her

around several times, before they sat down behind the big ferns.

"These chairs are the best for talking," he declared.

She shook her head, smilingly, and threatened him with her fan. They were evidently on the best of terms.

"They are the best for getting talked about," she said.

"My dear girl——"

"I'm not!"

"It is our business to be talked about."

"Our business seems to be prospering."

"At any rate, we've merited success! I'm beginning to pity the false prophets. We've given them excuse for prophecy."

"You think we have done enough for them?" She looked at him sideways.

"We haven't done enough for me."

He looked at her, and she transferred her scrutiny to her shoes.

"You enjoy taking people in, you mean?"

"I enjoy taking you out."

"You take me out, to take people in."

"When I take you out, I never want to take *you* in, Dolly."

"Don't you?" She picked a geranium slowly to pieces. "I didn't say you could call me that."

"I've proved that I can."

"You can do a lot of things that you shouldn't."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Why should you?"

"Because it's your name."

"That's nothing to do with it."

"Pardon me. If you had been christened Jemima——"

"I should have poisoned myself. Your name is Francis. Mother looked it up in Whittaker, or something." She laughed under her breath. "I don't call you Francis."

"I wouldn't let you." She tossed her head. "I'm Frank to my friends."

"Your friends aren't all frank to you."

"If I'm not 'frank' to them, they're not my friends."

"But I am."
"Then you must call me Frank, Dolly."
"When I call you Frank——"
"I shall come!"
"Don't be silly. When I call you—that—you can call me Dolly."
"I can call you Dolly now—Dolly—sweet Dolly—charming Dolly!"
She laughed. "If any one heard you, they'd think——"
"They think it already."
"Thought is too free!"
"Especially freethought!"
"You're delightful in epigrams."
"You're delightful in everything, Dolly, dear!"
"I wish the 'false prophets' could hear you call me that."
"Your wish is law."
"You daren't."
"If I dare, will you call me Frank?"
"The idea! Don't be silly. Oh, let me go!"

"Not till you promise."
"I won't. Don't look so injured—Well, some day, when I'm very pleased with you—No, I'm not. I'm cross. 'Sh! Here come the false prophets. Well, mama? What is it? Sing? Oh! I can't——"
"Do," Lord Marchester entreated. "Dolly, dear!"

Their mothers exchanged meaning glances, and Dolly covered her face with her fan.

"Very well," she said, sweetly, "Frank!"

Her shoulders shook as they walked in together. "You're giving them material for a breach-of-promise case!" she warned him.

"The difficulty in my case is that I can't promise the breach!"

She shrugged her shoulders, and glanced back at their mothers, who followed smilingly, arm in arm.

"It's too funny," she declared; "just look at them, nodding and congratulating each other."

"It's an excellent thing," he pronounced, "to be a false prophet. I've a good mind to go in for the business myself!"

III

LORD MARCHESTER went out by the back door just after twilight, and Miss Drake by the French window a few minutes later. They met in the shrubbery. They were both dressed for dinner, and she carried a wrap over her arm.

"Put that thing around you, Dolly," he commanded. "It's getting chilly."

"I'm not cold, really, Frank," she protested, but he took the wrap from her, and arranged it carefully around her shoulders. He was a long time placing it to his satisfaction, and they were both a little flushed when he finished.

"You're very dictatorial," she told him. "I wouldn't let you, if it weren't the last night."

"Our last night. We've had a good old time, Dolly."

"The best is to come."

"Is it—Dolly?"

"The confusion of the false prophets, I mean."

He tried to catch her eyes, but failed.

"They'll cut up rough. We've given them some grounds for thinking—what they think."

"You've acted splendidly." Her tone lacked the enthusiasm of her words.

"It wasn't acting, exactly," he said, slowly. "You see, I really *do* like being with you."

"*Do* you?" She lifted her eyes for a moment, and dropped them again. They walked up and down two or three times. Then he half stopped.

"Don't you think we could keep on being friends, Dolly?" he asked, "after we leave here?"

"In a way," she agreed, "only—you see we've pretended—" She hesitated.

"My friendship never pretended to be pretense, Dolly."

"Nor mine—Frank." Her lips trembled slightly. "I meant that we've pretended that it wasn't just friendship. Of course, *we* quite understood; but they'll be awfully cross

when they find out. Poor old prophets! They're dear old things, really, both of them."

"Need we tell them?" he inquired.

"You must tell them," she asserted.

"I haven't enough pluck."

"Not if I ask you to?"

He drew her arm a little closer.

"That wouldn't be pluck. I'm less afraid of them than of you. What am I to say?"

"The truth, of course."

"What is truth?"

"What you know, and I know."

"We may have different versions."

"I will accept yours."

"Suppose it doesn't agree with yours?"

"That's my lookout."

"You will stand by whatever I say?"

"Of course. Friends don't give each other away."

He laughed under his breath.

"I'll commit you!" he declared.

They took another turn, then he looked at his watch.

"They'll be coming out for their usual ten minutes before dinner. Let's go and find them."

She hesitated, glancing at him out of the corners of her eyes.

"You're making game of me," she declared. "You won't do it."

"You're a false prophet."

"What are you going to say?"

He laughed again. "Something that you'll back out of."

"You are a false prophet."

"I hope so. I shall be awfully cut up if you do."

She took her arm from his, and frowned, thoughtfully.

"We sha'n't be able to be on the same terms in future," she remarked. "You mustn't call me 'Dolly' any more, and— Here they are! We were looking for you—at least, Fr— Lord Marchester was."

"Er—yes," he agreed. "I want to tell you something—er—something about Dolly and me." He paused, doubtfully. "She—she said I might speak for both of us." He paused again, as if he wanted assistance.

"Ah!" said his mother. "I wonder if we could guess?"

"I wonder," said his mother.

"You couldn't," said Miss Drake, sharply.

"I suppose," said Lord Marchester, "you've guessed that we were in love with each other—and I was going to propose—and Dolly was going to accept me?"

"My dear boy," said his mother, "and my dear girl—I'm very glad."

"Very glad," said *her* mother.

Miss Drake turned away suddenly. She shivered a little—possibly with the cold.

"Well," said Lord Marchester, with a boyish laugh, "*you're quite right!*"

Miss Drake gave a sudden cry, and disappeared among the dark ferns. He found her there without any difficulty.



LILACS

THEY grew long ago in a garden old,
 Were wooed by the sun with an ardor bold,
 Till once there was pressed on the blossoms white
 The lingering kiss of a Summer night;
 And never again could the sun efface
 The purple stain of the night's embrace.

FRANCESCA DI MARIA.

A LIFE SENTENCE

By Charles Belmont Davis

THE first time I saw John Bradford was in the consulate at Florence. He apologized for not having a card, and was shown into my room. He walked with a shambling gait, and held his felt hat tightly between his hands. He sat far out on the edge of the chair, and looked about the room for some moments before he spoke.

"Pretty comfortable," he said, presently, with an assuring smile. "I don't want anything just now, but they told me at home I ought to call on the consul, and, besides, I knew your folks when they used to come to Jersey in the Summer. You don't remember me, I guess. You were a kid in short trousers. I used to sell crabs to the boarding-house."

"And have you come to Florence," I said, "to see the sights?" Once more he smiled, apparently at my ignorance of the great events which had been taking place in my own country.

"Well," he said, "I made a good deal crabbing, and then pa made a deal in land to some Summer folks for cottages, and ma said I was to go to college. I went to Peddie's for a year, and there I took to singing and playing. I had a knack for music, and played at home on the melodeon and at church, but I never knew how good I was until I got to college. Why, I made the rest of them feel foolish. The professor said I had talent, and I guess I have. 'Go abroad,' he said, 'and come back great.' And—well, here I am."

By this time he seemed very much more at home, and he crossed his legs and tossed his hat on the table. Then he went on to tell me that it was a ques-

tion of Paris, Dresden or Florence. Paris was too dear, Dresden was good for opera, but the professor had said the teachers of Florence were the best. "And so, I've come; but it's an old, gray place, and music lessons are terribly high," he said. "Seven francs a clip, but I'll take only two a week, and then I'll spend my extra time in learning Italian and French. English is no good over here. I think, in two years, I ought to know pretty much all of it, don't you?"

Two years seemed to me at the time but a short period to "learn it all," but I could not help feeling a distinct belief in the powers of the ex-crabman. Twice a week he came to the consulate, and twice a week he received a letter addressed in a rough, womanly hand, and postmarked "Freehold, New Jersey." He received his letters in the outer office, and only once or twice came to my door to nod a pleasant "good morning" to me. When I met him, by chance, he was civil, but that was all, and the fact that he had "sold crabs to my folks" was apparently an insufficient excuse to warrant an intimacy.

As well as I can remember, I had never exchanged more than a word with him after our first interview until over a year had elapsed. It was a rainy day in the early Spring, and I was hurrying across the Piazza Signoria, when I was attracted by the solitary figure of my friend Bradford standing under a large blue umbrella, and gazing in rapt silence at the figure of the Medusa in the Loggia. A woman in rags, as unpicturesque as a Tuscan woman can be, sat at the base knitting,

and half-a-dozen children who had escaped from the rain were playing about the other statues.

I stopped, and stood at Bradford's side. At first, he seemed not to notice me, but after a moment he turned and nodded to me and smiled with the same lovable, comprehensive smile with which he had honored me at our first meeting. "Pretty good, eh?" he said, nodding in the direction of the Medusa. "And that woman sits there with her back against it as if it were a pine-tree and she was only waiting to drive the cows back to the yard."

For a minute, we stood there under our dripping umbrellas. I had just been to a marriage at the old palace, and I had been detained far beyond the appointed time, and was consequently annoyed and in a hurry to get back to my office, and yet there was something about the queer, lank figure of the Jerseyman, standing alone in the old gray square, that attracted me to him. I must admit that I had become callous to the great beauty of the Medusa and felt a trifle abashed in the presence of the ex-crabman who stood before it in such silent and devout admiration.

"They say," he went on, without taking his eyes from the statue, "that David is the best of them all, but I can't see it. Somehow, it hasn't got the strength and—oh, well, you know some things hit and some things don't, and it don't seem to me quite possible that the man who made that could have done it from models, and—and all that. It seems to me that it must have come to him just as a song sometimes comes to a man who writes music—when he is in bed, and he is obliged to get up and write it all down, and the next morning he plays it over, and finds that he has written better than he knows how. And, do you know, that music always makes him feel, and everybody else who hears it, just so much better than they really are."

The rain had suddenly ceased, and the sun shone brilliantly on the glistening pavements. The woman sitting at the base of the statue put her knit-

ting in her gaping pocket, and the children, laughing as they went, ran down the steps of the Loggia into the sunshine of the piazza. My friend glanced up at the patches of blue sky, folded his umbrella, and took off his hat as a token that our talk was at an end.

After that, I saw and heard little or nothing of him. Sometimes I met him in the street, and once, on my way to Fiesole, I found him sitting on a stone wall, gazing down on the town of Florence and the brown dome of the cathedral; but he was always alone, and among the students I never heard his name mentioned or even met any one who knew of his existence. Twice a week he continued to come to the consulate, and if I had not heard his familiar voice asking for his letter, I, too, I fear, should have forgotten this friend of my youth.

I know of no place where one can be in the world, and yet so completely out of it, as in Florence. As one of the show towns of the earth, hundreds of men and women pass through its gates every day. For a week or two they bask in its sunshine and the fragrance of its flowers; they worship the art and religion of its Madonnas, and still more the religion of its gray-green hills and purple skies, and then they pass back again through its gates into the outside world of which Florence knows but little. It is easy to lose one's self in this passing show, and to live unknown—even unnoticed. Indeed, there are a great many people who come to Florence to die slowly. Who knows the story, for instance, of the man who lives alone in one of the great palaces beyond the Porta Romana, with health and youth and wealth, and no friends? or the history of that very old man who lives with his one servant in the gray villa with the brown shades? And who guesses the tragedy in the life of the woman who drives every day in the smartest of broughams in the Cascine, and has no friends, but everything else, I imagine, including a past? But how much more alone are the young men and women students living

in the high old houses of the ancient town, with its narrow streets and spreading eaves! There cannot be very much sunshine in their lives, for where one breaks away from the single gray room into the glare of success, there are hundreds who remain in those gray cells, sometimes starving for food and always for that goal they have placed so high and to which their talents may never carry them.

Although alone in Florence, the ex-crabman had not, so far as I knew, lived in poverty; he had never sought my company or my aid, and so I had never made an effort to force myself upon him to learn of his method of life. I paid him but one visit, and that was two years from the day I had first seen him in my office. He called for his letter in the morning, and told me very simply that he had decided to return to his home in New Jersey and would leave on the following morning.

"I have never asked you to come and see me," he said. "I live very quietly, but if you can drop in this afternoon or this evening, I should be very much pleased."

I thought he asked me purely from a sense of duty, and not from any real desire to see me or know me better; but, under the circumstances, I could not well refuse his invitation.

He lived in one of the old houses that face on the via San Spirito and run through to the Arno. His room was on the third floor, and from the window one could look down on the river and beyond to the old bridge and still further to the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio and the Campanile. It was Saturday afternoon, and the pavements were crowded with the bourgeoisie on their way to the Cascine. Between the two lines of people there passed slowly a long file of smart carriages, carrying pretty girls and women in all their Summer finery. The town was flooded with sunshine, and the waters of the Arno were very blue. Of all others, it seemed a day for one to be under the clear sky and far away from the small, warm room

to which I had come. But when I turned from the window and glanced back into the room, things were very different, and the sunshine faded as if the sun had been crossed by a black cloud. It was a small room, stenciled with modern Italian coloring; the floor was of stone, and the hangings cheap and bad. In one corner stood Bradford's trunk, packed, but open, and ready for the locks. The mantelpiece and table had been stripped of whatever ornaments they may have held—all save one, a copy in cheap plaster of the Medusa, standing alone upon a table in the centre of the room, among a débris of torn papers and letters. Bradford was sitting at the table, his chin resting between his hands. His eyes looked straight ahead at the miserably painted walls.

"You are really going?" I asked.

"Yes," he said; "that is why I wanted you to come here to-day. I had something I wished to tell you here." He motioned to a chair across the table from where he was sitting. Then he raised himself from his elbows, and started in slowly and with much deliberation to tell me the story of his life in Florence.

"There must be a good many young men and girls, too," he said, "that come here from the country to study music, or singing or painting, just as I did, and I suppose they go to you, when they arrive, for a little advice."

I nodded my assent.

"Well," he said, "that's why I brought you here. I wanted you to see the finish of it all for yourself, so that you will be able to tell them just how wrong and hard and bad it all is."

He took a letter from his pocket, and shoved it across the table to me. It was much creased, and had apparently been handled many times. It was very short; the handwriting was most difficult to decipher, and was unquestionably that of an uneducated woman. This is what it said:

MY DEAR SON:

You know what I told you in my last letter. Well, your father had another stroke. He is very bad. The house is

going to pieces, and now that pa can't be in the saloon we are losing all the trade. You must come back and take his place, and look after him and your grandma. He can't last long.

Your affectionate,
MOTHER.

"I remember," I said; "your father kept the tavern on the Sea Road."

Bradford nodded.

I heard the latch of the door raised, but, as my host did not turn his head, neither did I. I heard the door open and close again, and then a young girl tiptoed over to his side and slipped down on her knees and rested her head on the heavy arm of the chair in which he sat.

She gazed at me through big eyes with a strange light of fear and hope in them. Still looking at me, he laid his hand very gently on her head, and brushed back the masses of thick black hair from her forehead.

"This is Tina," he said. "She and I are great friends. She is the niece of Madame Masi, who owns this house. She is a very good girl, and she has been very good to me, haven't you, Tina?"

The girl looked up at him, and smiled as though she understood. She took his hand, placed it upon the arm of the chair and then rested her cheek upon it.

"When I first came to Florence," he said, "I didn't quite understand. The houses seemed so gray and the streets so very narrow, and the sky no bluer, the sunshine no brighter, than it was in my own country. I had no old friends, and not enough money to make new ones, I thought. But when I had been here but a short time, I found that I needed no old friends. I got to love the narrow stone streets and the iron-barred windows and the darkened courtyards. In time, the shopkeepers began to speak to me, and even some of the porters with the gold wands in front of the palace nodded to me. I needed no old friends, because I found myself surrounded by them everywhere I walked. I got to know the eaves of every house on our street, and the doves that lived under them,

and just where the patches of sunshine should lie in my path every bright morning. Late in the afternoon, I got to going to Bardini's café at the corner, and so picked up much Italian as we sat and talked around the tin tables. The part of it all I found I liked least were the students I met at the school. They seemed so foreign to my life."

"But you always came to the consulate," I said, "for your letters."

"Yes," he answered; "they were from my mother."

For a moment, Bradford's mind seemed to have turned back to his old home; finally, pulling himself together, he went on with his story.

"And then Tina came here to live, and I saw Florence through her eyes. I think I know this town as no other American ever knew it. We know every street and every picture and every gate and every path in the country for miles and miles around. We have wandered over forgotten roads, and climbed the green hills together; we have sat under the olive-trees and looked down on the town from every hill-top, and oh, God, how we love it! It seems to me sometimes that everything worth while happened here or on these hills. Think of the men and the history, and just think of the beauty of it all!"

"And the Medusa?" I asked. "Are you going to take that home?"

He looked at me curiously for some moments. "I thought of it," he said.

"I suppose they will put it in the bar-room, and my mother will drape it in cheesecloth." He suddenly stopped, and clasped his hands above his head. "Forgive me, forgive me!" he gasped. "I didn't mean that. I swear I didn't. Good God, to think I should have come to that!"

He rose from his chair, and walked across the room and back again to the table. "No, you're right," he said; "you're right. The Medusa, like the rest of it, must be a memory—that's all, just a memory." He suddenly raised his arm, and struck the figure with his open hand, and the poor

plaster thing fell back on the table and broke in many pieces. The head rolled upon the floor, and Tina started to pick it up, but Bradford motioned her back.

"Don't touch it," he whispered, "don't touch it!"

The girl buried her head in her hands, and cried softly. Bradford walked to the window, and for a few minutes I watched his dark figure outlined against the sky. Then I went over to him, and put my hand on his shoulder. "And the girl?" I said. "You can't treat her as you have the Medusa. She must be more than a memory."

Outside, the air was gold with orange sunlight. The streets were black with the Florentines out for their holiday. We could hear the hum of their voices, and from a distant piazza came the faint echoes of music.

"Do you think," he said, "I could take her away from this? Where will she find anything to take its place at home? It is bred in her bone. She would die without it. Believe me, sir, I have lived with them and I know that the things which are beautiful and only pleasures to us are their very bread. They must feel the hot sun above them, and they must live and laugh with their own kind. You can't transplant a Tuscan rose, and I tell you sometimes it is

very kind to be cruel. There is no music and no laughter, and nothing at all of beauty, on the Sea Road."

As I left the room, the girl was still crying gently to herself, and the man was still at the window looking out over the golden city.

And so, as I afterward learned, Bradford went back to the home on the Sea Road, and Tina lived on in the old house of Madame Masi. The broken pieces of plaster which once formed a Medusa adorn her mantel-shelf, and her aunt tells me that the young girl trembles curiously every time the bell clangs out in the courtyard and announces the arrival of a visitor.

The sunshine still filters through the eaves which overhang the via San Spirito. To many people, this same sunshine of Florence, as well as the fragrance of its flowers and the beauty of its palaces and the religion of its pictures and its hills, has surely done much good, and has left them better and happier and finer than when they first entered the town gates. But, like great music, it has sometimes, perhaps, worked for ill, as well as for good. The sunshine and art and flowers which have ennobled some, have sapped the life and destroyed the virility of others, and left them as they did Bradford, mere wrecks on the shores of their high ambitions.



OF MEN AND WOMEN

MAN admires woman, but loves himself; woman loves man, but admires herself.

He who thinks to please her by taking her at her word, is either a born fool or a self-made one.

Man is logical, but unreasonable; woman, irrational, but convincing.

If a man observe a woman carefully, he will learn everything about her—that she wants him to know.

The best cure for a man's conceit is woman's laughter.

L. DE V. MATTHEWMAN.

A PLEA EXTENUATING

THOUGH they call me of fond hearts a rifler,
 In Cupid's dominions a cad,
 In matters of courtship a trifier,
 I am moved by no motive that's bad!
 For I think, ere you marry, it boots you
 Far more than one preference to show,
 Since it's hard to decide which one suits you
 Till you've wooed every girl that you know.

The bee knows a bloom may be dripping
 With nectar or poisonous lees,
 But he can't tell which one save by dipping
 His nose in each flower he sees;
 And the chap is deceived quite the neatest
 Of any bland fool I recall,
 Who vows some one's lips are the sweetest
 Before he has tasted them all.

So I'll not be too hasty in wedding,
 No matter what some folk may say;
 The woman for me may be treading
 Some strand undiscovered to-day.
 Is it strange, then, that each season sees me
 In search of her, here or afar?
 For I can't tell which one would best please me
 Till I've seen all the women there are!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



WHICH?

"I UNDERSTAND that she has been leading the life of a slave."
 "Farmer's wife, or society queen?"



ADVICE APPLIED

PHYSICIAN—First of all, you must stop worrying.
 PATIENT—All right; I won't give a hang whether your bill is paid or not.

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

A MONOLOGUE

By May Isabel Fisk

HERE I am, darning socks—I never thought I should descend to anything so unromantic. And there Tom sits by the fire, reading the paper—such an ungraceful pose, too—and not paying the least attention to me. Oh, dear! married life is so different from what I fancied it to be! Nothing but old bothers about butchers and grocers and servants and—things. Ouch! I have pricked my finger again.

In my girlish dreams I used to see Tom and myself wandering through beautiful groves, hand in hand, for the rest of our lives, picking wood violets, all the year round. Oh, no, we couldn't do that in Winter. Well, in Winter I could imagine him kneeling at my feet all day long, begging for a kiss—Tom used to do that sort of thing very nicely—the begging, I mean. Now, I couldn't picture him in such a position. He actually grabs me and kisses me in a noisy fashion! I am beginning to believe Tom doesn't understand my nature—my aspirations, the love of the beautiful and poetic. Tom is so material. He doesn't seem to care at all about cultivating his higher ego—I think that is what it is called. Perhaps, after all, I have made a mistake. I believe I should have married a man of artistic temperament—one that would appeal to my most exalted sensibilities; one that wouldn't expect me to darn socks! Ugh! There, I have stuck my finger for the eighteenth time.

I don't believe I am as happy as I have thought I was. Lots of people

said I should not have married a man so much older than myself. Maybe some of those people were right, though I remember how angry I was at the time I heard it. Oh, dear! I wonder how many times I have sighed this evening.

What's that noise? There it is again. Goodness! what can it be? It's a snore! How perfectly disgusting! It is positively insulting! Oh, dear! There, I nearly sighed again. Well, I just won't!

Tom is certainly getting stout—so prosaic. Horrors, I can see over the top of his chair, a wrinkle of fat in the back of his neck! That is death to all sentiment forever! And, upon my soul, I believe I see two gray hairs—and, yes, that looks like the beginning of a bald spot. I never can stand that, and if it gets to be a pink bald spot, I shall die!

How superbly that young tenor sang Lohengrin, last night! How heavenly to marry a man like that, who would sing to you from morning till night, and, of course, never think about things to eat or be annoyed if breakfast was delayed an hour or so, and make a fuss on account of being late down-town. Ah, what a paradise life would be, mated with one like that! And I couldn't fancy a Lohengrin with a bald spot, or wearing holes in his socks! Ouch! I won't have any fingers left if I don't stop pricking them. Oh, dear, it is a sad, sad world—nothing but trouble.

Well, I've heard people of experience say you are really happier and cer-

tainly better off when you reach the utterly indifferent stage. I am sure I have got there, and I think—oh, yes, I am sure it suits me exactly. There's Tom, evidently perfectly indifferent toward me. No, no! I didn't mean that. No, I don't want him to feel indifferent toward me—not at all. I shouldn't care for that in the least. Of course, there is no reason why Tom *should* feel indifferent toward me. I am quite sure I am all any man could demand in a wife. Tom never finds fault with me, and that must be because I am perfect. I didn't exactly mean that—I meant I must be as near perfection as any wife *can* be. Oh, no, Tom has no reason to be other than quite satisfied with me.

Still, it seems strange that he should sleep when I am right here. Oh, but that's absurd! And yet, this is my birthday, and he's forgotten all about it. I am so glad I am indifferent—I don't care at all! I shouldn't mind, even if Tom were to flirt with some other woman; it wouldn't disturb me in the least. Now I come to think of it, Tom leveled the opera-glasses three times toward that horrid Mrs. Lorimer, last night at the opera. I remember distinctly it was three times, though my back was turned at the moment.

I wonder if he thinks she is better looking than I. She doesn't dress as well—and she hasn't a particle of taste, and she is downright vulgar, and I am pretty sure I have heard things about her. Anyhow, if I haven't, I will! And she's stupid, and I hate her—I hate her!

Tom! No, I mustn't disturb him. There, I'll move the screen before the fire; I'm sure he is too warm. No wonder he sleeps—he is so tired. That's from Lohengrin last night. He did not feel at all like going, and went only to please me. How good he is to me! And he does look awfully well in evening dress. Yes, he is really getting gray—poor darling, worrying over my extravagance, I'll warrant. And gray hair is so distinguished. No, he isn't bald, after all. That was only the shadow from the firelight. And I do hate thin men. He's never cross, and I know I am often so disagreeable. Tom, wake up; I want to tell you—No, I want you to tell me how nice I am. . . . Oh, Tom, you are mussing my hair! And Tom, what are you putting on my finger? For my birthday? . . . Oh, Tom, what a beauty—I was just dying for a ring like that. Tom, darling, you are the best man in the whole world!



SAME THING

"HAS Mrs. Lowboy any marriageable daughters?"
 "No; but she thinks she has."



COSTLY

DE STYLE—Now that you own an automobile, I suppose you're out a good deal.

GUNBUSTA—About ten dollars a week.

THE BISHOP'S CROSS

By Richard Le Gallienne

WHENEVER one of those memory-days is coming round which give me the opportunity of showing Well-Beloved how much I love her, and how glad I am that she came to be born, I invariably turn my steps, often weeks beforehand, to the Shop of Dreams. This is an antiquity shop whose window, filled with old silver, old lace, old violins and such-like matters of memory and dream, is no little of an anachronism in one of the busiest shopping streets of New York. The elevated railway thunders but a block away, and cross-town cars flash by—the fan that once waved in the hand of the Pompadour, or the slippers that once held the little feet of Marie Antoinette.

One of the ways in which I contrive to retain the affection of Well-Beloved is by my ministering to her passion for old silver. It comes over her at more or less regular intervals, and I am always on the lookout to appease it, and often it happens that just as her love seems to be slipping away from me I call it back by the luckily timed gift of a filigree card-case, a pair of Regency shoe-buckles, or a fancifully devised vinaigrette.

Wonderfully unlike all other women, Well-Beloved is unlike them in this also, that she cares nothing for modern trinkets, however costly, and takes no heed of the great goldsmiths' windows as we walk the streets together. Three parts of the pleasure in her various bibelots is the touch of human history upon them, the faint fragrance of forgotten dreams. Modern jewels, however beautiful, are to her way of

thinking mere raw material. "They have never lived," she is fond of saying. "Wait till they come, as some day they surely will, to our Shop of Dreams, with the mark of tears upon them, tarnished with sighs, worn with kisses—then they will be really beautiful. But as yet they mean nothing. Their value is still to come."

Thus I have never bought diamonds for Well-Beloved, for they would give her no pleasure; but, as I said, whenever a red-letter day falls to be celebrated, I turn my feet to the Shop of Dreams, and, after long inspection of its storied window, all that romantic wreckage thrown up there by the sea of life as upon a shore, I turn the handle of the gate of ivory and enter into a hades of Empire frivolities, eight-day clocks, damascened armor, cameos from the bosoms of our grandmothers, old snuff-boxes and dead men's rings.

The proprietor is himself no little of a sentimentalist, and he is attractively learned in the history of the dream-things it is his charming business to sell. He and I are long since old friends, and he allows me to drop in and prowl about the nooks and corners of the centuries without a thought of traffic. Many are the hours I have spent with him recalling the story of this or that relic, and he is long since well aware of "madame's" insatiable appetite for old silver.

A little while ago I called in and found him in the characteristic act of examining an antique through the little magnifying glass which is always more or less screwed into his right eye, and with which, as I tell

him, I verily believe he goes to bed at nights. He looked up at me and nodded, without removing the glass.

"Excuse me a moment," he said, returning to his antique, "I have something to show you."

When he had completed his examination, he called me from my contemplation of an exceptionally fine Etruscan vase, and, taking a packet from a drawer, began to unfold it.

"What will madame say to this, do you think?" he said, smiling, as he revealed a superb silver cross, carved with vine-leaves and set in its centre with a large four-sided amethyst.

"I say!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, it's a fine thing, isn't it? They don't often come into one's hands. A veritable bishop's cross. French, of course. Early eighteenth-century, I should say. You notice the mitre; and the amethyst, you see, stands for the cushion. Here are the tassels at each corner of the setting. It is a reliquary, too," and he turned it over. "You see how it opens at the back. . . . But here is something to delight madame. Look, isn't it human, the eternal feminine—doesn't it touch your heart?"

He had opened a little door at the back of the cross, and there, inside, instead of the expected piece of blessed bone, or fragment of the true Cross, what do you think was there? A tiny powder-puff!

O woman! woman!

"How Catholic!" I exclaimed; "and I'll wager she was a good little devout Catholic for all that!"

"She is that—poor little woman, if ever there was one," said my friend, with more than usual sympathy in his voice.

"You know her, then?" said I.

"Yes! I know her," he said. Then presently he continued: "You will notice that this powder-puff contrivance, this little lid here, is comparatively new. Ten years old, maybe. It was just a freak of her gay little head—in the days when it was still gay."

My eye had for a moment wandered

away and fallen upon a picture that I had never noticed in the shop before.

"Where did you get that picture?" I exclaimed.

"Stunning, isn't it?" he answered.

It was a modern picture, a singularly vivid impression of a crowded centre of New York at twilight—Thirty-third street and Broadway at the rush hour, with the elevated coming up against a smoky sunset, a picture filled with the poetry of modern cities.

"Though you wouldn't think it," said my friend, as I turned once more to the bishop's cross, "the cross and the picture belong to each other."

And then he told me a story.

Some eight or ten years before the bishop's cross came into the possession of Well-Beloved there was a certain young man, in an exceedingly wild and woolly Western town, who had been inconveniently gifted by nature with the unreasonable desire to paint beautiful things. Yes! it became more and more evident to his perplexed and disappointed connections that Paul Channing was born, or rather doomed, to be an artist. But for this disconcerting tendency, he might have taken advantage of the reversion of a prosperous dry-goods store belonging to his father, and thus reposed upon a prosaic "certainty," instead of whimsically choosing the very precarious uncertainty of the life of art. His case, too, presented an additional peculiarity and difficulty which deserve mentioning. His choice of subjects was so bewildering.

The town of Busiris was by no means without a certain appreciation of art—that is, art of a certain kind, a very fixed and certain kind. It allowed a certain mysterious importance to the artist who painted subjects from "the Greek," Italian landscapes, sacred pieces, or, in short, anything that had been painted so often before that it had become quite natural and recognized to paint it—waterfalls, say, or mountain scenery, or sensational shipwrecks. Animals, or "still life," reproduced with recognizable fidelity,

the town of Busiris was prepared to accept. But, alas! Paul Channing cared to paint none of these things—and he defended his disinclination with extraordinary heresies. The mere fact of these subjects having been painted so much, he said, was reason enough for his painting something else. The business of the painter was to paint new beauty, and thus reveal it to eyes that had yet to find it out. There was no need to go so far afield for beauty. It was at our very doors. It was everywhere about us, rainbowing our common lot and commonplace surroundings. Our very offices and factories were beautiful, seen in the proper light and with the right eyes. There were moments when Busiris was as beautiful as the Parthenon—though, of course, in a different way. Italy, Greece! No, America was beautiful enough for Paul Channing. He would be the painter of America. One would rather have expected Busiris to have welcomed this patriotic leaning in its young artist. But, curiously enough, this choice of subject seemed to be the most incomprehensible of all his vagaries. America was useful, indeed—but, beautiful! No, that was no part of its business—and it was all in vain that Paul painted the Joplin Soap Works at sunset, or caught the romantic expression of the shoe factory by moonlight. Nor were his impressions of the “limited” coming in from Chicago, or of a crowded trolley-car at the rush hour more convincing to his fellow-citizens.

So it was that, partly in disgust and partly in search of new subject-matter, he decided to go East. He had once been to Chicago, and loved a skyscraper in course of erection, and for a long while he had dreamed of painting New York, with its turreted peninsula, singing like a forest of stone in the breath of the Atlantic.

Paul, with the fierce independence of the artistic young, refused to accept anything of the proffered aid of a father, perplexed but kindly, beyond his fare and a hundred dollars, which he was confident of repaying a week

or two after his arrival in New York out of the appreciation of a more sympathetic public.

So it was that Paul Channing came to New York, and found cheap yet pleasant rooms in the neighborhood of Washington Square. He was not entirely friendless in his new home, for, as it always providentially happens with artists, though so far away from New York, he had already been found out by two or three experimental young painters whose studios were round the corner from his lodging, and letters from whom had done no little toward keeping him alive out there in Busiris. But he did not immediately advise them of his presence in New York, for the reason that he wanted to have the city all to himself for a little while—a sort of artistic honeymoon. He shrank from the risk of any one else displaying it to him. He knew how he was going to love it, and he knew—so he thought, in that sublime self-confidence of youth which wins most of the battles of life—that he needed no one's assistance to see whatever beauty belonged to it. It was going to be his city. He had dreamed of it for months, even years, and now at last he was come to paint it. So days, even weeks, went by without his even thinking of being lonely; for the beautiful city was more beautiful than he had dared to dream it, and the days were too short for him, as he sat with his sketch-book and strove to fix his rapt impressions of its adventurous, even foolhardy, charm. He would spend whole days on ferry-boats just to look at that wonderful sky-line of office-buildings resolutely, even sternly, insisting, without a thought of beauty—and yet so terribly beautiful, with the terrible beauty of power. So the beauty of cities had always come about, he said to himself. Strong men had needed strong buildings for their merchandise, their cannon, or their prayers, and from the sincerity of their strength the stone had soared and massed itself together, and, because it was real, had unconsciously become beautiful.

After a while he had made so many sketches that he felt the need of showing them to some one, and so called on his fellow-artists—thereon to become quite a small lion among them. Here was the man they had all been looking for! And soon the name of Channing was being mysteriously passed on from studio to studio, as the latest esoteric man of the future. This was naturally gratifying to the young painter, but, as it did no more than confirm his own quiet idea of himself, it in no way turned his head. On the contrary, it had the uncommon effect of concentrating him upon his artistic purpose, and once more secluding him from the generously eager society that now began to seek him. Paul was so far, at all events, a true artist that the praise he received did not paralyze him with self-satisfaction; it simply certificated a dream and a hope. As a rule, the young artist is so intoxicated with the first fragrance of his first laurels that they send him to sleep upon them, never to wake again. But Paul was different. He realized that the budding laurel is very liable to blight, and that from no cause is it so liable to languish as the laureate's own neglect. Therefore he absented himself from facile adulation, and shut his door and lived with his sketch-book and his canvases.

But, being a painter, his room necessarily had windows, and looking through them one day, he saw a beautiful face. A beautiful face was somewhat irrelevant to Paul—for his dreams had been all of beautiful buildings. However, the face was so beautiful that he was compelled to look at it again, and again and again. The face was bent over a strip of embroidery, the beautiful face that was evidently striving to catch all the light of a cloudy day. There was a sad little garden to the house where Paul lodged, and it was by so much as its few yards of dank and disappointed greenery that the industrious little seamstress and Paul were divided from each other. But Paul was some seven stories high, and the unknown beauti-

ful face sewed for ten hours of the day on a level with the garden. Paul saw her smitten by a strong top-light, which irradiated her head with glory. She gave no evidence of ever catching sight of him, and indeed may have been entirely unconscious that his eyes were on her so often and so long each day. Dimly seen, seated a little way from the window, was an old lady who worked in company with her, on similar lengths of needlework, and, the month being June, the two sat with the window open, and sometimes waifs of their talk, happy, laughing talk, and little songs, frailly sweet, would float up into Paul's open windows. But the laughter was all he could understand, for the words belonged to a language foreign to him. French, he said to himself, though he neither spoke nor read that beautiful tongue, and French surely was that dark beauty so vivid, so distinguished, so brilliantly brunette. As he looked on it Paul recalled the lines of an Eastern poet:

“Did you ever see a woman
Quite so black, yet quite so fair!”

And, day by day, the face at the window, up and bright and industrious often in the very dew of dawn, came to mean more to him, more and more to pique his curiosity and stir his sense of wonder. It was so exquisite a face, and the life of this unknown mother and daughter—though they were evidently poor and hard working—suggested a certain sad distinction; was, so to say, so “aristocratic” in its refinement. So a dowager and a young queen in exile might ply their needles for a livelihood with haughty industry.

If Paul's studio had had many visitors, it could hardly have escaped notice that his sky-scrappers were for the moment in eclipse, and that studies of a certain beautiful head occupied all the available spaces of easel and wall, chair and even bedstead. Temporarily, the river-front had lost its fascination, and the sketches and canvases littered about

that were not occupied with the beautiful face were, mysteriously enough, given up to sketches of a not particularly beautiful cat. It was not Paul's own cat. No cat shared his studio with him, and up till now cats had never attracted him. I suppose it is not hard to guess that it was a cat that drowsed on the window-ledge of the unknown, as she sat at her work—the third member of the family.

One evening when Paul returned from a walk he was somewhat startled to find this little friend of hers curled up on his divan, in the deep, pathetic sleep of petted, trustful animals. Pussy opened her eyes sleepily, but did not stir, and suffered him to stroke her without protest, presently purring by way of friendship. As Paul stroked her he said to himself over and over: "Her little cat!" and then he looked out to see if there were any signs of agitation in the window below. The blind was undrawn, and a lamp burned on a little table, but the chair was empty. Perhaps Black-as-Night—as in his thoughts he had long since called the stranger—was out looking for her pet. It was natural to suppose that she was very unhappy at its loss, and very unlikely that she should guess the best place to look. Obviously it was Paul's privilege to do Mademoiselle Gabrielle Chartier a real service—for he had made it his business to learn her name—and possibly . . . Well, at all events, it was wonderfully in his power to send her to bed easier in her mind than she could otherwise have gone with "her little cat" wandering out of doors—heaven knows where. There was a broad blue ribbon round pussy's neck, and Paul bethought him that he might allow himself so much reward as to attach to it one of those portraits of "her little cat," with the compliments of the artist. This he thereupon did, and having made pussy happy with a long drink of milk, they set out together. Arrived at Mademoiselle Chartier's door, his knock was answered by a maid-servant, who, acknowledging the receipt of pussy, volunteered the in-

formation that mademoiselle was out, looking for her, and would, she was sure, be proportionately grateful.

Returning to his studio, Paul watched the lonely lamp for a full hour, but nothing happened. Then, deciding to smoke his bedtime pipe and drink his usual night-cap, he left his window a moment or two. When he returned the lamp down there was no longer burning.

Black-as-Night had evidently come home and found her little pussy-cat all safe. Before she put out the lamp—had she looked up at his window with a momentary gratitude? He felt that she must have done that anyhow—and what did she think of the picture of "her little cat"?

These questions were, in some degree, answered by a dainty note that came to him next evening, in which Mademoiselle Gabrielle Chartier acknowledged Channing's great kindness in restoring her precious pet, and wished to thank him, too, for the pretty sketch. Only, she could not help adding that Mr. Channing had failed to note a very uncommon characteristic of "her little cat": the white ring around her tail—the Ring-o'-Roses, as she called it. Otherwise the portrait was perfect, and Mademoiselle Chartier begged once more to express her gratitude to the artist.

Paul naturally looked out of his window for the next day or two with unusual interest, though it was hard on him that he had to take more care now than before, lest he should attract attention, and thus seem to be claiming the acquaintance of a smile. Black-as-Night was there, punctual and industrious as before, but, so far as he could observe, she seemed no more conscious of the studio on the seventh floor than formerly. Her beautiful head was bent over her stitchery with the same day-by-day absorption, and her beautiful hands sped the needle and the colored silks as industriously as before. And in the shadow, a little away from the window, an old lady plied a needle and thread on the glowing tapestry—and on the window-

sill "her little cat" blinked lazily in the sun—with unmistakably that ring of white roses around her tail.

Several days passed, and Black-as-Night worked at her window, and Ring-o'-Roses sunned herself on the window-sill, and the Summer days went by. But Paul had fallen unaccountably idle, and the incident of "her little cat" seemed as closed as a marble tomb. Paul left his door open several evenings, in the hope that Ring-o'-Roses might be tempted once more to go in search of adventures; but—no! "her little cat" stayed at home. Then it occurred to Paul that possibly it might not be taking undue advantage of an opportunity to make a more careful study of Ring-o'-Roses, with special regard to the unique decoration of her tail. To this end he bought a powerful opera-glass, so that he might make no mistakes this time—and he made it a point of honor with himself that he would look only at Ring-o'-Roses, and not, in the weakest moment, take advantage of her beautiful little mistress. Indeed, he was not hypocritical in this, and I trust the reader will not blame him if one day he could not resist the temptation of looking at the pattern she was working upon, and if, following the pattern, his eyes, so to say, eaves-dropped upon her beautiful hands—and then made a sudden theft of her face. But for this Paul was so remorseful that he shut up his glasses and used them no more. He would not look in those beautiful eyes by stealth, would not be a thief of their privacy. If some day—yes, if some day they cared to give up their pure depths to his gaze—well, ah, how well it would be! But to filch their solemn quietude, to come secretly upon their silence—no, Paul already loved Black-as-Night too much for that.

But she could hardly resent his sending her what he called "Ring-o'-Roses—Corrected Portrait." The sketch could not fail to give her pleasure, and somehow he felt that she would divine that, supposing her in-

terest in the sketch did not extend to the artist, he was not the man to trouble her with further reminders of his existence.

So the new portrait of Ring-o'-Roses was duly finished with great care, and directed to Mademoiselle Chartier, and—was it wrong of her?—Black-as-Night looked up at the studio next morning and—smiled.

Black-as-Night presently followed up her smile with a note in which Mademoiselle Chartier thanked Mr. Channing for the sketch, and added that she and her mother would be glad if he could take tea with them on the following Thursday afternoon. Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that Mr. Channing was proud to accept the invitation. And Thursday afternoon found him seated inside the very room, and in the very chair by the window, which had so long been mysterious and dreamlike for him.

Mademoiselle talked English exceptionally well for a Frenchwoman, talked it better, indeed, to Paul's way of thinking, than most American girls, because she added to it the daintiest suggestion of a French accent. Her mother, a frail little old lady, talked English hardly at all, but there was no need for her to talk. She was as silently expressive of the distinguished charm of the old French world as a piece of old lace—or those sacred embroideries which she and her daughter worked on, in the spirit of lay sisters for the holy, beauty-loving church to which they belonged. In a modest way they had quite a reputation for their skill with their needles, and Madame Chartier would tell with pride of her little daughter, during her education at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, before the disastrous days when M. Chartier, having lost all his money through the war, had died and left them penniless—how the good sisters had named her *Doigts d'Or*, because of her skill even as a child. Whenever there was some particularly difficult piece of needlework to be done it was always brought to little *Doigts d'Or*.

Presently Doigts d'Or poured out tea with the golden fingers, and Ring-o'-Roses came in from the window-sill, with a curious little interrogative purr, which was plainly a request for milk. Doigts d'Or poured out a saucerful for her, stroking her affectionately as she did so.

"I suppose she is not really beautiful," she said; "but then, you see, we love her, and love makes anything seem beautiful—don't you think?" turning her rich brown eyes full on his face. It was the first time he had thus looked into them. How deep they were, cloudless as a southern sky, and pure as a child's!

Yes; such a child she was, yet so profoundly, so exquisitely, so benignantly, so tragically, a woman. Eyes more acquainted with the external characteristics of woman than Paul's—which, as we have seen, had, up till now, mainly occupied themselves with public buildings—in addition to applauding her beauty, would have been able, scientifically, so to say, to divine in Gabrielle, in uncommon possession, those even rarer and more precious qualities of womanhood which have made the Madonna the supreme type of human worship. Perhaps older and sadder eyes than Paul's are needed to see and appreciate these qualities immediately and at their work; that infinite fidelity which no wrong-doing can estrange, which withstands all the shocks of fate and time, and that divine tenderness which keeps open for us, when all other havens are closed, the arms of its immeasurable consolation.

Ah, yes! Gabrielle was indeed beautiful, but she was more. All over her sacred womanhood it was written that she was, too, the perfect mate, the woman men have died to—lose; all that is concentrated in the word of all words which enshrines the indestructible loyalty of human feeling, that word so sweet to be so strong, the word—wife.

Paul was too inexperienced to know how much more the word wife means than the beautiful girl we marry; but he was already deeply in love with the

beautiful girl, and she—well, when a woman like Gabrielle is going to love a man she is not long in making up her mind. But she takes some time to call it "love" even to herself. She knew she liked Paul's blond curling hair, and his brave gray eyes, and she liked the way he shook hands. They were strong, clean hands, she said to herself, and she looked forward to his holding her little bird of a hand in his again. And, these important matters being silently understood, Paul took leave, going away enriched with Madame Chartier's promise for herself and daughter to pay a return visit to his studio on an early day.

The day was naturally a long time coming, but it came, and, for the first time, women's skirts—angelic sound!—rustled into Paul's bachelor solitude. How wonderful it was to have such wonderful visitors! Paul could not only have kissed the hem of Gabrielle's pretty black-silk skirt, but the hem of her old mother's also. He took them to the window, and together they looked down at Ring-o'-Roses sitting in the sun on the window-ledge. To think that they were actually up here with him to-day, and looking down as he had so often looked, without a thought that that beautiful Doigts d'Or would some day bend her face out of his window so thrillingly near his!

Of course, there were many sketches to be examined, and Paul grew happier still as he saw, with that instinct of the artist that cannot be deceived, that Doigts d'Or *knew*. It was clear that she saw his artistic dream, and was able to appreciate his success. His heart gave a great sigh of gladness at realizing this. Presently Doigts d'Or mentioned the work of a certain young French painter who also was given up to the beauty of cities, and Paul's confession that he knew nothing of French painting, not even of anything French—beyond his visitors!—led to Doigts d'Or talking of her beautiful French poets . . .

Were they French songs that sometimes floated like silver butterflies up into his window? he asked. There

was one he loved so . . . but, of course, he couldn't remember the words—not even hum the tune.

"Could it be '*L'aube naît et ta porte est close*'?" Gabrielle asked, "or perhaps '*Le Roi d'Yvetot*'?"

But Paul did not know, adding that he might dare to ask her to teach him some of the songs, if it were not like asking a bird to teach one how to sing.

Doigts d'Or laughed, and having translated to her mother, Madame Chartier shook her head playfully at him and said that "*Messieurs les artistes*" were dangerous flatterers.

Before they left, Paul summoned up courage to bring out from a hiding-place, where it had been hurried away with others, what he considered his best sketch of Black-as-Night. She blushed deeply, but her eyes glowed with pleasure, as she recognized herself, and her old mother was evidently won from that moment. Paul explained that he would beg Madame Chartier's acceptance of the sketch, but it was so imperfect, etc.—yet if only she would allow her daughter to sit for him, he might hope to do something more worthy. His visitors protested against his wasting his time in such a fashion, but Paul retorted by a businesslike proposition. He should paint mademoiselle's portrait, and she should teach him some of those little French songs. She need not waste her much more precious time either, but could go on with her needlework while he painted. So it was a bargain, and Doigts d'Or agreed to fix an early day—to sit for the picture, to teach monsieur French, and to work hard at her embroidery, all at once. Clearly, there would be little margin left for such industrious young people to get into mischief.

Quite two sittings, if not three, came and went with exemplary industry. Doigts d'Or's face grew on the canvas, the length of stitchery grew on her lap, and Paul's knowledge of French had progressed as far as a respectable mastery of the auxiliary verbs; for it had seemed best to begin his studies in this

humble way rather than with those airy, delicate lyrics from old France, or modern Provence, which, though so simple and bird-like on Doigts d'Or's lips, were found, after all, to exist by a complicated linguistic organism which, it was to be feared, would take her pupil some time to master. They seemed so easy to have made, so divinely natural to sing, but oh, how grim with grammar and stiff with learning they became the moment one tried to learn them for one's self! It was as though one should study the anatomy of a nightingale.

It was, I think, on the occasion of the fourth sitting that suddenly Paul lost all patience with the conditional imperfect tense of "*avoir*," and, at the same time, throwing down his brushes, likewise brought to a standstill the golden fingers, and holding them still on Gabrielle's lap, as he kneeled in front of her, looked a long look into her face, and told her what they had both known in their hearts—with that mysterious intuition of love—the moment they had first spoken together. Oh, the dear words—how often they have been spoken, how often written, how often printed; but let us print them once more. Even in print how they breathe incense, and thrill with wonder!

"I love you," said Paul.

"I love you," answered Gabrielle, taking his brows in the golden fingers, oh, so tenderly, so tenderly—and as she looked at him her brown eyes filled with tears. Is there anything so infinitely sad as complete happiness? And for these two life's one completely happy moment had come. O golden moment, stay forever! Let love remain just as it is in this first moment of its transfiguring avowal, an altar-flame of perfect fire, a newly open flower divinely drunk with all the dews of heaven.

Hardly less happy was Madame Chartier herself when the young people went that very afternoon, and told her their love and asked for her blessing, and, when the day approached which there was no necessity long to

defer, she brought from unsuspected hiding-places a dowry of lace and fine linen and old silver which made Gabrielle clap her hands for joy and pride. How clever our quiet old mothers can be when they have a mind to!

So it came about that Paul and Gabrielle were married—the difficulty of Paul's Protestantism having been smoothed over by a kindly dispensation—and the manufacture of sacred embroidery and the immortalization of sky-scrapers went on under the same happy roof.

To have won Gabrielle had seemed marvelous, wonderful, but that moment of winning her, rapturous as it had been, what was it compared with this daily living by her side; to be allowed to spend one's days in the close neighborhood of such fragrant goodness as Gabrielle's? For, as time went on, her goodness of nature grew to seem more wonderful to Paul even than her beauty. It seemed, indeed, that her beauty grew out of her goodness—was her goodness. Her goodness had the charm of a natural gift, and her religion, as Paul soon learned, as he studied her day by day—oh, happy student!—was no less an unconscious fruition of her whole spontaneous being. She prayed—as she sang.

It often amazed him, as he watched her, to see how real certain beliefs and attitudes so fragmentary for himself were to her instinctive, childlike nature, and how little ways of thought, which in others he would have called either superstitious or insincere, were the true religion of a little, trusting child.

By a hundred engaging ways Gabrielle led Paul even to respect "superstitious practices" which in others he would have described as pertaining to a Polynesian savage.

For example, little Gabrielle never took medicine without making the sign of the cross several times and saying one or two *Ave Marias*, and Paul had to hold her in his arms, too, and reassure her before she would set her lips to the bitter stuff.

"I don't like it," she would say.

"I know, little girl, it's terrible. Only remember how much good it is going to do you."

"I'm a brave girl, aren't I, Paul?"

"Indeed, you are, Gabrielle. But, see now—see, it will soon be down, and then——"

"What will you give me, then, Paul?"

"You shall have a pound of your favorite chocolate."

"Truly, Paul?"

"Truly."

"Wait a minute, then!"

Gabrielle would thereupon mystically tattoo herself with prayers, and presently, "Now!" she would say, and the bitter stuff was swallowed at last.

I have no doubt that this sounds silly to read. Had it been any one else but Gabrielle Paul would have called it idiotic, but it was so plainly real to Gabrielle that he could not help respecting it, and wondering if that was not the only efficacious way of taking medicine.

Gabrielle, I said, but Paul's name for her was more and more *Doigts d'Or*—for what a task, O Golden-Fingers, is this over which you bend with so soft a light upon your face!

Doigts d'Or!

But, alas! In so short a time shall little Denis wear these fairy garments upon his frail limbs. Ah! little Denis, if only you had stayed a year or two longer, worn out your baby clothes, and set *Doigts d'Or* at work upon some larger sizes. If only you had stayed! But, alas! the days of Denis were hardly more than the days of a snowdrop, nay, hardly longer than a snowflake's was the life of little Denis. If only you had stayed longer, Denis—who knows!

We have been so occupied with Paul Channing's domestic affairs that we have almost forgotten that he was all the time an artist. He himself may well have seemed to have forgotten that all-important fact—in the lives of artists, and, alas! in the lives of those who love them. How many women have forgotten, or failed to realize it, to their own sorrow! No artist is really

at heart a human being—he belongs to the Undines, to those fairy tribes of the air and the water that mean no harm with their appealing simulation of humanity, but do so much. They literally “enter in” to the human passions of their fellows—even undertake the human responsibilities!—with such a reality of interest—become, for instance, husbands and fathers with such picturesque sincerity. It is they who make the cradle-songs that break the heart, and the love-songs that make the cradles. To declare that they are without soul or heart seems preposterous when all the litanies and lyrics of life are plainly of their making. And yet— Well, let us return to Paul Channing, merely recalling once more that, though he was by this the happiest of husbands, he still remained the most dedicated of artists.

Without, of course, forgetting Gabrielle’s beautiful face, his eyes had once more remembered his beautiful buildings, and, stimulated by that fire which love mysteriously brings to all the affairs of life, he made pictures of New York so amazingly beautiful that even New York itself at last became aware of them. People known as “magnates” began to buy his work, and great ladies swept in and out of his studio. In short, Paul Channing “arrived,” became a vogue, and found himself caught up into the social life of the great capital. His worldly affairs prospered, but having none of that worldly ambition which is too often a humiliating weakness of the provincial artist, he never forgot the simplicity which had made him strong. For a nature such as his the common temptations of life flaunt themselves in vain.

Properly speaking, life has only one danger for the true artist—the danger of beauty.

Paul Channing had loved and married the good beauty. He was now to meet the evil beauty.

Beauty breeds its monsters, its colored poisons, its terrible flowers. Just as there are strangely spotted shapes of flower and fruit, subtly colored, fan-

tastically formed creatures of earth and air and water, wicked fancies of nature whose fairness seems somehow sin, all evil enchantment and deadly sweetness, beauty that is all lure and snare, and the heart whereof is foulness and dust—so there are women like Delilah Marsh. “Del” Marsh was the name by which she was usually spoken of in the over-cultivated society of which she was, perhaps, the most poisonous flower. To her intimates she was Lamia, the snake-woman, with the strange red hair and the violet eyes and the skin white as a shroud. She was beautiful as some exquisite fungus in the decaying woods, and indeed she was the child of luxury and degenerate idleness. She was very rich, and learned in all the potent essences and distillations of art—in literature, in music, in painting. Her library was like a garden heavy with evil scent, and everywhere on her walls the soul was seen as the beautiful bond-slave of the senses.

Her life was a continuous quest of new emotions, or rather sensations. Her pampered nerves cried out for the new thrill, and Paul Channing’s art gave her for a moment that priceless shock of novelty. She bought many of his pictures, and his goodness, his simple boyhood, fascinated her. His freshness came upon her like dew, and his virgin spirit stirred all her impulses of seduction. And, alas! for him, he fell before her as one stricken by some sweet-smelling narcotic. She drew him to her as a snake draws a bird.

O Gabrielle, with your beauty, white as the northern star, wholesome as a meadow of daisies! where are your songs, Gabrielle—those pure little songs that used to float up into the window? Have you forgotten your songs, Gabrielle, or have they lost their power? Alas! Gabrielle sings no more. She only pines and prays, and watches Paul’s haunted face with a dying heart.

Alas! little Gabrielle, must you come like this to understand that you love one of those terrible lovers of beauty—an artist? He loves all beauty—your

good beauty, Gabrielle—yes, he loves it still; but the evil beauty has now laid its spell upon him. God made him so. God help you and him, little Gabrielle! You cannot help him, Gabrielle. The poison must have its way with him, spread its devil's fire through his veins. But, who knows?—he may not die. Love him and love him, Gabrielle, and watch and pray, and maybe he will grow whole again, and come back to God and to you, and the old, clean dreams, with purged eyes and a heart made new. Watch and pray, Gabrielle. There are saints to help all us poor sinners, and there is the compassionate Mother of us all.

All true religion is instinctive—yes, superstitious, if you will. It is the profound organic recognition by one's whole, multiplex nature of invisible standards for our visible lives, obedience to laws of right and wrong essentially as "unreasonable" as the unseen commands of gravitation. It is dumbly unargumentative, and relies in silence on the aid of those invisible powers, which it obeys without a question, as simply as it draws its breath. Those who follow the invisible law naturally rely upon the invisible guidance and protection. Gabrielle's goodness obeyed the laws of God as simply as her beauty obeyed the laws of nature. As she strove to live according to the will and the example of the Blessed Saints, you can hardly blame her if she relied, in times of difficulty, on their assistance. Her own particular saint was St. Anthony—of Padua: he who finds for us what we have lost. Little Gabrielle knew, I imagine, little of St. Anthony's personal, Paduan history. She would, very likely, have been surprised to hear that he was so recent a saint, and have wondered what the poor people did who had lost things before he was born.

Gabrielle had lost—a heart; not quite lost it, perhaps, but was in danger of losing it. To whom should she go if not to St. Anthony? The Holy Mother was ready with illimitable pity when hope was quite gone by, and love was an irretrievable fact. She alone

could dry our tears and bind up our wounds, but St. Anthony—ah! he could bring us back what we had lost, all the more precious by its seeming theft.

There was a little New York church where St. Anthony stood day and night—far away, indeed, from Padua—stood ready to help any sad soul that cared to light up his kind face with the flame of a votive candle. Near by his shrine was a box divided into two parts. Both parts contained candles, and one part, being labeled "ten cents," contained longer candles than the other part, which was labeled "five cents." Candles are earthly offerings to heavenly beings, and, if they were to cost nothing, what would be the point of offering them? Surely the intercession of an invisible power is bought cheaply, even nominally, at such prices.

Gabrielle always bought five-cent candles, for she was a good housewife, and knew that God does not wish us to spend more on prayers than we can afford. Her idea was that, had she given a million dollars for a candle, her prayer would have stood no better chance of being heard. Indeed, she would probably have maintained that—the poor candles come first. Such was her faith in God.

So, day by day she would go and tell St. Anthony of her sorrow, and beg him to give back to her the heart of the man she loved.

At first, when Paul had fallen under the spell, she had been just humanly jealous, as any other woman might have been, angry and vindictive; but the more she watched the face of Paul, and marked how kind, though haunted and withdrawn, his ways, the more she came to regard him as smitten with a sickness of the soul, literally a love-sickness. He was sick of an evil dream. She would nurse him—self-forgetful as any nurse. This fancy of his meant no more than some fever accidentally caught. Even though it should kill him, it would not mean that he did not love her, or disprove that she, of all women, was his wife.

For the time, Paul had not only forgotten—or seemed to have forgotten—Gabrielle; his art languished, too. Like us all, he had but so much life to give—here or there. His pictures needed his breath and his blood no less than he needed his breath and blood for himself. So when it happened that Lamia stole from him all the life he had, his pictures also began to die.

Critics began to ask what was the matter with Paul Channing's work. Its virility seemed to be fading out of it. It was growing perfunctory and phantom-like; and, indeed, properly speaking, Paul worked no more. He was incapable any longer of that tranced absorption of all his faculties in a healthy fury of work which had possessed him as he carried his sketch-book close to his heart to and fro on the New York ferry-boats. The clear electrical atmosphere of his passionate vision of a new beauty born in the West, a stern beauty of strong towers, lit by the rising sun of a mighty people, had been invaded by a perfumed miasma, and the stealing sweetness softened all his strength.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors—death-pale were they all;
Who cried, "*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*
Hath thee in thrall—"

How often he said that over to himself, with a hopeless smile at his bondage!

"Yes," he would add, "and to this day they are all kings and princes and warriors that are her victims, the strong men, and the pure and the noble. Oh, Lamia's tastes are delicate! The honey she loves to steal is hived, like David's honey, in the hearts of the strong."

But, though he might fight against the coils, the beautiful snakes' eyes were too strong for him, and more and more they drew away his life.

Yes, his life—for suddenly, one day, with a white shock all through him, he realized that literally also Lamia had done him a mortal hurt. As even strong men may die of heart-break, he felt that he was, too, dying from within, dying of some broken pride of his spirit, dying, as it were, of very

shame for the violated idealism of his soul. There are fevers of the soul for which the body must die, and, by some mysterious intuition, it was suddenly whispered to Paul that before many months were past, he was going to die.

When the thought first came to him, he dismissed it as foolish. Fevered men have these fancies. But it recurred again and again, and, indeed, before long he became conscious of a certain physical failure in himself, a fading impulse and a lack of endurance. He was manifestly thinner, too, and he would sometimes quote laughingly to himself the lines of that Eastern poet he loved:

So thin grow I with longing, and this ache
That in the grave will now be ended soon,
The folk at evening my pale body take
For the new moon,
Being like a thread of silver for your sake.

He would even say them to Lamia, too, with that sad laugh in which there is no laughter, the sad laugh of the passing soul. And Lamia, who in her way loved him, too, would feel a little sorry for him, and wonder . . .

"Paul," she said, one evening, as they sat together among the books and pictures that gave out poison like night-blossoming plants, "are you sorry that you have loved me?"

"Yes," answered Paul.

"Sorry! Why? Why are you sorry?"

"Because, Del—I have never really loved you."

"Never loved me!" and she laughed the scornful, fatuous laugh of the conceited poison.

"No, Del, I have never loved you for one second. I have been your poor drugged and delirious slave. I have pressed your lips to mine as an opium smoker presses the little pipe to his lips, and dreams he is king of all the gardens of the sky. Have I loved you, Del? Yes, if the man loves the poison that steals his soul and saps his body, and melts his manhood like wax, all in exchange for a few painted wings of the butterflies of dreams. Loved you! Yes. I have loved you as men love poisoned honey, and opi-

ates loaded with death, and all the foul sweetness of the pit of hell—but, like all such men, how gladly would I give back forever all your spices and your songs for one drop of dew glittering in some old, pure morning of my boyhood."

"Dear Paul," said Lamia, "dear Paul—your talk grows more picturesque than ever. How full of color it is, as vivid . . ."

"As the flames of hell," Paul interrupted her. "Don't you know that dying men are the best talkers in the world? No dinner-table can match the death-beds of some men for brilliancy. Del, I am dying, dying of the poison that is you . . ."

"You are not very polite, Paul. Death-bed wit is usually more polished . . ."

"You wicked thing!" cried Paul, growing pale with anger, and rising to go on shaking limbs. "How wicked you are! You see me dying—yet you can jest like that. You wicked thing! . . ."

But Lamia stayed his going with a caress, and gave him a long, singing drink in a delicate Venetian glass, and ran her white, wicked fingers through his curls, a little damp with the fever that was in him, and soothed him, sang to him, and told him that it was he who was cruel, not she; that indeed she loved him; if he loved her, too, was it any fault of hers?—and if it really hurt him to love her, he should go away—yes, go away that very night, and see her no more. And, for answer, Paul, lying back on the settee, with eyes like grave-candles, drew her close to him, and looked long into the poison-flower of her face.

"Sing to me, Del," he said, presently. "Sing me . . . 'The Woman of Dreams.'"

Going to the piano, Del recited, rather than sang, to the accompaniment of a touched note here and there—recited well, for Lamia loved poetry and all beautiful things with a real love, and perhaps was no more intentionally evil than any other beautiful evil thing:

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"I am she who comes back and comes back with the sound of the rain,
I am she who whispers and whispers hidden among the leaves;

I am the sea and the wind, and the sigh of the Summer grain,
And the lonely reed am I that rocks and whimpers and grieves.

"I am the woman who came in the dawn and the dew of your days,
For when first awakened your eyes 'twas upon my face they fell;

From your cradle you rose and walked the world in the hope of my face,
Seeking the woman of dreams, in heaven, in earth, and in hell.

"Yes! I am the woman of dreams, the woman no man shall wed—

Would you mate with the rising moon, or the glimmer of stars upon streams?
Or marry the mist on the mere, or the hopes in the heart of the dead?

Then home to your hearth shall you bring me—me, the woman of dreams.

"Have you seen a light on the hills you never shall touch with your hand?

Have you heard a voice in your sleep you never again shall hear?

Have you dreamed of a sea so blue, and, oh, of so green a land,
Believed in a tale more true than the stories of eye and ear?

"Have you dreamed of a gold and a silver more silver and more gold

Than men mine in the mountains, or deep dived for some dream

Pearl beyond reach of diver, at the spent end to hold

A drowning clutch of radiance, a sinking, circling gleam?

"I was the gold, I the silver, the light on the hills, the pearl,

The sound of the Summer leaves was I, the sound was I of the rain,

The hope in your heart was I, your dream boy's dream of a girl,

Yea, the woman of dreams was I—that all men must love in vain.

"Ah! never shall you be mine, beloved, nor ever can I be yours!

You are the kiss of the sun on the sea, I am the flying foam,

Ah! shall we live in a rainbow, love, so long as a rainbow endures,

For I am the woman of dreams, and the rainbow is my home."

When she had finished, Paul was silent for a long time. He was thinking of Gabrielle.

"Yes," he said, presently, "it is

time I went back to my woman of dreams"

"I thought I was your woman of dreams, Paul," said Del, coming over to him and laying her hand on his hair.

Paul laughed, scornfully.

"You! You, my woman of dreams! No, Del, men don't dream of women like you. Men dream of good women, faithful women, of noble comrades, and splendid mothers—not phantom women, poison women, like you"

"Paul!"

"Yes, I'm rude, I know. One is always inclined to be rude when one is wretched, and to reproach others when we are most disgusted with one's self. Forgive me. I know you are not to blame. You, like us all, are only fulfilling the law of your nature. Poisons cannot help being poisons. It is for the sane man to keep away from them. Good-bye, Del. This is good-bye. I don't think we shall meet again."

However, Paul and Lamia did meet again, for her snare was strong even when clearly seen to be a snare; but one afternoon, as Paul was returning home from a call upon his cruel enchantress, he happened to pass by the church where Gabrielle said her prayers, and there indeed she was mounting the steps just as he was passing. She had not seen him, but there was somehow a look of intense loneliness about her little figure, a dwindled, hopeless look about her very frock, that smote his heart; and, unperceived of her, he followed into the church. Except for half-a-dozen shadows kneeling here and there in the dimness, the church was empty. It was very dark, and indeed was only illuminated by the light from two shrines at its far end. To one of these Gabrielle bent her steps, and having fixed and lit a candle on the great democratic candlestick, she knelt down near by and prayed

Paul knew for whom and for what she was praying, and, as he watched her kneeling there, his evil dream fell from him. Rising from her knees,

Gabrielle met his eyes and saw that her prayer was answered.

"Gabrielle, will you forgive me?" he said. "It was all a foolish lie, a wicked dream. I have never loved any one but you in all my life. I was enchanted, Gabrielle. I did not know."

Gabrielle's face grew transparent with a look of joy almost terrible, and she fell almost fainting into Paul's arms.

"Oh, but is it true? Paul, is it true?"

"It has been true all the time. Nothing else has ever been true. I have been sick, that is all. Now I am well. I think it was your prayers, Gabrielle. I heard them all the time."

Gabrielle turned involuntarily toward the saint who had brought her back the heart she had seemed to lose.

"Thank St. Anthony with me," she said, "for it was he brought you back to me." And Paul knelt by her side, and prayed with her; and then they went out into the street together with shining eyes.

And, indeed, unless certain kind heavenly powers do have our poor mortal hearts in their keeping, how shall one explain the complete oblivion of those months of fever that, now and immediately and forever, blotted out for Paul the name of Delilah Marsh? The ancient king who bathed in the Eastern river did not rise out of the water more cleansed of the leprosy of his body than Paul rose from his knees that afternoon cleansed of the leprosy of his soul.

"And the cross?" said I, after a long silence.

"It was an heirloom," answered my friend who bought and sold the dream-silver, "that had come down to Madame Chartier from a grandfather who was the bishop of some place or other in Northern France. It is a humble thing compared with a gold cross that once belonged to the same grandfather, which poor Gabrielle brought me one day, when"

"When?" said I.

"When Paul Channing was very ill."

"And she brought this . . .?"

"Some weeks after he was dead, and she and her mother were going back home to Europe."

"She has gone, then?" said I.

"Yes; and I bought all Channing's pictures she could bear to part with. I hope some day to be able to send her quite a little surprise packet of money, the profit on all I could afford to give her at the moment."

"Channing died, then?" said I.

"Yes."

"But he never went back to Lamia?"

"I don't believe he ever thought of her again," answered my friend. "I became rather intimate with them all, from the time that his wife first brought in to me one of his pictures to sell. It struck me so much, and she herself so interested and charmed me, that I asked to call and see some more of his pictures . . . and so we got to be friends."

"He was a very great artist, and as he lay there wasting away it was wonderful to watch his face light up as he talked about his old love—not Lamia—but the beauty of New York; and to the last there was always a charcoal

and a piece of board at his side, with which in a few firm strokes he could do more than most men with a month's hard work. And, strange as it may sound, though he was so ill, I never saw so much happiness as among those three people. Their love for one another was the most beautiful, most truly happy thing, I ever saw. The shadow of death seemed only to make it the more beautiful."

"And Gabrielle?" said I.

"It was strange to see her. It was as though she were not losing him at all—only parting from him for a little time. She had come to have as sure a faith in his love as in God Himself, and his death was to her literally little more than as though he were to be divided from her by a long journey. But that they should meet again some day at the end of the journey, and be each other's beyond the power of parting, she evidently no more doubted than she doubted that St. Anthony had brought back his heart to her that afternoon in the little church."

"Your old silver is very sad," I said to my friend, after a while.

"Yes," he answered, "it is filled with sighs."



THE STRATEGY OF SAMUEL

PROUD FATHER—I tell you, sir, that boy of mine will be a wonder!

FRIEND (*wearily*)—What wonderful thing has he done now?

P. F.—Why, the other day he ate all the preserves in the pantry. I overheard him say, as he smeared the cat's face with the stuff: "I'm sorry, Tom, to do this, but I can't have the old folks suspect me."



MOST of us would prefer to be virtuous but for the companionship that would entail.

THE GAME

SHE plays her game with a ready hand
 And a steady hand and true;
 She marked her man,
 When the game began,
 And she knows him through and through.

Nothing to win, and nothing to lose,
 And nothing to choose or care!
 A kiss for the stakes,
 And if his heart breaks,
 She is only playing fair.

A smile, a rose, and a maddened fool,
 A saddened fool—and wise!
 And the woman won!
 The game is done—
 Dear God! the look in her eyes!

But ah! Time was ere the woman would,
 Ere the woman could, and now
 She owes her skill
 To the careless will
 Of the man who taught her how!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



GOOD THING FOR THE TEACHER

MAUDE—Signor Yellrini is quite enthusiastic about her voice. He swears there's a fortune in it.

ETHEL—No doubt. And he's getting it out at the rate of five dollars per lesson!



THOUGH it is undoubtedly true that a friend in need is a friend indeed, most of us prefer that he should borrow of some one else.

DRÔLE DE MAMAN

Par Charles Foley

LA vieille petite Mme Lourmel est assise sur la terrasse de l'hôtel. Sous ses yeux, en pente douce, la pelouse verte dévale jusqu'au lac bleu. Les oiseaux chantent, les roses parfument l'air. Et la petite vieille dame se sent tranquille, reposée, toute heureuse.

“En somme, pense-t-elle, je fus bien avisée de fuir Paris, de quitter ma fille et mon gendre. Je les aime... mais ils sont trop mondains; cela me fatigue! Les jours où notre maison ne regorge pas d'invités, c'est que ma fille Lyonnnette, une des plus jolies femmes de Paris, et mon gendre, Paul Darc, l'auteur en vogue, sont eux-mêmes au bal ou au théâtre. On me confie alors les deux bébés. Je les adore... mais ils sont gâtés et bruyants; cela me fatigue encore plus que les réceptions! Toute cette jeunesse-là ne se doute donc pas que les vieux ont besoin de repos? Ah! que j'ai bien fait de profiter d'une accalmie en leur vie agitée pour me payer quelques semaines de vacances! Nul ennui d'argent, les santés excellentes, la pièce de mon gendre reçue, répétée au Vaudeville, c'était l'occasion ou jamais de venir reprendre ici des forces pour l'hiver. Je retournerai vers eux, patiente, réconfortée, toute prête à rentrer dans mon rôle de bonne-maman à tout faire.”

Elle aspira l'air tiède et pur. Engourdie, sous le soleil, d'une voluptueuse paresse, elle s'étira plus mollement dans le fauteuil d'osier.

“Je n'ai pas de nouvelles d'eux, songeait-elle de nouveau, mais c'est signe qu'ils s'amusent. S'il advenait n'importe quoi de fâcheux, ma fille m'écrirait tout de suite...”

Ces réflexions furent interrompues par une voix qui criait derrière Mme Lourmel, au seuil du salon de l'hôtel ouvrant sur la terrasse:

— Bonjour, maman!

La vieille dame, stupéfaite, se retourna, vit sa fille et son gendre descendre les degrés du perron. Elle s'efforça d'aller au-devant d'eux, mais dut s'arrêter, remuée d'affreux battements de cœur. Et, la voix étranglée par la crainte, elle demanda:

— Les petits ne sont pas malades, au moins?

— Du tout. Je les ai laissés à ma belle-mère.

— Et votre pièce, reprit Mme Lourmel de sa voix altérée d'inquiétude, est-ce qu'elle n'a pas réussi, votre pièce, mon cher Paul?

— Un immense succès!

— Vous n'avez aucun ennui?

— Aucun.

La jeune femme et son mari éclatèrent de rire à ces questions. Alors Mme Lourmel, rassurée, se dérida, s'attendrit et les embrassa, expliquant naïvement:

— Comment! les petits vont bien, la pièce a réussi, vous n'avez pas de tracas... et vous venez me voir tout de même? Ah! comme c'est gentil!

— Si tu trouves cela gentil, maman, sois gaie... au lieu de rester devant nous pâle et tremblante.

— C'est que, d'habitude, vous venez me surprendre ainsi quand il y a quelque chose de grave... si bien que, à votre vue, j'ai cru à un malheur. Cela m'a saisie. Ce ne sera rien.

— Ah! que tu es drôle, maman!

Paul Darc et sa femme s'assirent près de Mme Lourmel et se mirent à

conter leurs projets en toute désinvolture étourdie, car ils savaient la vieille dame très bonne—puis, s'il fallait se gêner avec elle, à quoi servirait une mère?

— Depuis longtemps nous désirions faire l'ascension et déjeuner au chalet de la Pointe-Noire, dit le jeune homme. C'est l'excursion en vogue; tous nos amis s'y rendent cet été. Mais vous sachant ici, tout près, au lieu d'aller directement au pied de la montagne, à Chatex, qui est une station chic mais chère, nous avons pensé à venir...

— ...Nous faire héberger par toi, interrompit Lyonnette avec le mièvre sourire qu'on tenait, dans le monde, pour irrésistible. Le plaisir de te voir, et puis l'économie, tout nous a décidés!

— Et combien de temps resterez-vous près de moi?

— Toute la journée et toute la soirée, reprit la jolie femme; nous ne partirons que demain matin.

— Pourquoi si tôt, mon Dieu?

— Parce que, reprit à son tour le gendre, nous devons être, dès demain soir, les hôtes des Vassal, en leur villa de Chatex, et que, avant d'aller chez eux, nous voulons justement faire à pied la fameuse ascension.

— Mais c'est encore dangereux en cette saison. La neige n'a pas fondu. J'entends dire qu'on craint une débâcle, des avalanches... d'ailleurs le ciel se couvre à l'horizon et le lac fume: c'est signe d'orage. Restez-moi quelques jours; remettez l'ascension à plus tard.

— Impossible, maman; il y a un bal chez les Vassal. Et puis, l'ascension, ça m'amusera tant!

Mme Lourmel insistant, Paul Darc coupa court au débat:

— Nous sommes las, belle-maman, et nous avons besoin de secouer la poussière du voyage. Nous allons remonter dans notre chambre. Ne vous dérangez pas: nous vous rejoindrons pour dîner.

Restée seule, la bonne petite vieille dame, devant les gros nuages qui couvraient le ciel et assombrissaient le lac, se rappela tous les accidents arrivés dans l'ascension dangereuse de la

Pointe-Noire. Le projet de Lyonnette et de Paul la tourmentait.

Le soir, au dîner, elle leur fit part de ses appréhensions. Son gendre se moqua de sa pusillanimité, puis déclara péremptoirement:

— Nous partirons demain matin, au petit jour, par le premier bateau!

— Le temps est bien menaçant, répéta Mme Lourmel, redevenue pâle. L'air est lourd. On étouffe. Si l'orage éclatait cette nuit ou demain matin, ce serait terrible!

— Nous partirons tout de même; c'est irrévocable.

— J'irai vous reconduire jusqu'au bateau...

— Oh! non, maman! s'exclama Lyonnette. Cela t'obligerait à te lever trop tôt... puis, tu marches doucement: cela nous retarderait... sans compter que Paul et moi n'aimons guère les effusions de famille. Mieux vaut brusquer la séparation: ça fait moins de chagrin.

— Si vous le voulez bien, proposa le jeune homme, nous nous dirons adieu ce soir même, avant de remonter chacun chez soi. Ce sera le plus simple et le mieux.

Ils passèrent au salon. La petite vieille dame, préoccupée, écouta le babillage des jeunes gens d'une oreille distraite. Quand dix heures sonnèrent Lyonnette et Paul se levèrent et Mme Lourmel les embrassa.

— Il n'y a vraiment pas moyen de retarder cette ascension? demanda-t-elle d'une voix que l'anxiété rendait toute chevrotante.

Lyonnette, contrariée, s'écria:

— Ah! que tu es drôle, maman! Puisque c'est décidé! Si je t'écoutais, je ne m'amuserais jamais. Je suis jeune, moi; je n'ai pas ton âge: laisse-moi en profiter!

Une fois dans sa chambre, Mme Lourmel s'étendit sur son lit, mais ne put pas dormir. Elle imaginait tout ce qui pouvait arriver de terrible dans l'ascension. Elle fut sur le point d'aller trouver sa fille et son gendre, de les supplier encore de ne point partir. Mais elle ne savait pas le numéro de leur chambre et personne, au milieu de la nuit, n'aurait pu le lui dire. D'ail-

leurs, elle n'eût peut-être pas même osé frapper à leur porte. Les heures de nuit passèrent en insomnies fiévreuses, coupées de visions, de cauchemars. L'air était étouffant. L'orage n'éclatait pas encore.

Elle se leva, ouvrit la fenêtre. L'aube livide perçait déjà les nuages noirs, le tonnerre grondait au loin. Des lueurs d'éclairs empourprèrent l'espace, et la pluie commença de tomber. Debout au balcon, frissonnante, la vieille petite dame, ne pouvant surveiller l'entrée de l'hôtel ouvrant sur l'autre façade, ni la route ombragée par de grands arbres, guettait du moins le passage du bateau sur le lac. Il apparut enfin, fuyant vers Chatex. De loin, malgré les larmes qui lui remplissaient les yeux, la pauvre mère distingua à l'arrière, sur le pont désert, deux silhouettes élégantes. Son cœur se serra douloureusement. Elle agita son mouchoir. Le bateau disparut sans qu'on lui répondît et cela ne la surprit pas, car elle se rappela que sa fille et son gendre n'aimaient pas les effusions de famille.

Trempée et grelottante, elle quitta le balcon, se laissa tomber dans un fauteuil, devant sa table, puis rédigea un télégramme, réponse payée, pour le chalet de la Pointe-Noire, afin qu'on l'avertît dès l'arrivée des deux voyageurs. Elle sonna, donna la dépêche, et, pour tuer le temps, ouvrit le journal local. Elle lut: *Ascensions dangereuses. — Avalanches à craindre. — Cinq touristes disparus.*

La feuille s'échappa de ses mains. Ressaisie par l'obsession, incapable de rien d'autre, elle se répétait, les yeux fixés sur la pendule: "Ils sont en vue de Chatex... ils débarquent... ils traversent le village... ils s'engagent dans la sente escarpée... ils atteignent le premier glacier..."

Et, soudain, elle frémit: l'orage éclatait furieusement, faisant rage en rafales déchaînées, en écrasantes trombes d'eau, en mitrailles de grêle, en fracas de tonnerre, en immenses incendies de l'espace. La petite vieille dame, renversée dans le fauteuil, toute roidie d'angoisse, gémissait sourdment:

"Ah! les pauvres enfants!... les malheureux enfants!"

Et elle fermait les yeux pour ne rien voir de l'effroyable cataclysme, mais des flots de larmes l'obligeaient à rouvrir les paupières.

Ce fut une agonie jusqu'à l'instant où on lui remit la réponse à sa dépêche. Elle la parcourut fiévreusement: "*Aucune nouvelle des touristes venant de Chatex. Accidents redoutés. Menace d'avalanche. Equipe de secours prête à partir dès l'accalmie.*"

La malheureuse femme se leva telle qu'une folle, s'élança vers la porte, peut-être pour télégraphier de nouveau, peut-être pour chercher des guides, peut-être pour courir à l'église: elle ne savait plus! Sa tête se perdait.

Dans le couloir, défaillante, sans souffle, à bout de force et prise de vertige, elle s'appuya au mur pour ne pas tomber, et, tout à coup, croyant rêver, les yeux agrandis d'indicible surprise dans sa face ravagée, elle vit sa fille qui venait tranquillement à elle, toute fraîche, toute rose, toute souriante en son déshabillé de mousseline fanfreluchée de dentelles.

— Toi!... toi!... Vous n'êtes donc pas partis! fit la vieille petite dame en reprenant vie dans ce cri de si extraordinaire émoi, que la jolie Lyonnnette et Paul, arrivant derrière elle, se regardèrent, étonnés.

— Partir d'un temps pareil, merci! D'ailleurs, nous n'en pouvions plus, expliqua la jeune femme. Une fois couchés, nous avons dormi comme des dieux. L'orage même ne nous a pas réveillés! Adieu les beaux projets! Quand, le premier, Paul a rouvert les yeux, le bateau était passé depuis deux bonnes heures. Aussi avons-nous fait la grasse matinée. Nous venons seulement de nous lever... Mais pourquoi nous regardes-tu avec ces grands yeux-là? Qu'est-ce que tu as donc? Ah! que tu es drôle, maman!

Mme Lourmel semblait éveillée en sursaut d'un cauchemar affreux. En une réaction brusque, elle s'affaissa sur elle-même et, le visage enfoui dans

ses mains glacées, tout le corps secoué de grands sanglots, elle bégaya éperdument:

— Ah! Ce que j'ai... ce que j'ai... vous ne pouvez pas savoir... vous ne pouvez pas comprendre!

Et comme elle continuait de pleurer sans plus s'expliquer et que des gens, passant dans le couloir, les regardaient curieusement, Lyonnnette et Paul, vexés de cette *effusion de famille*, relevèrent la vieille dame, la menèrent dans sa chambre où sa fille adoucît la gronderie de son sourire irrésistible:

— Ce n'est vraiment pas gentil de ta part, petite mère. On ne sait comment te prendre! Tu nous demandes de rester, nous te sacrifions notre excursion... et c'est avec des larmes et des sanglots que tu nous en remercies!

Cela ne te cause donc pas de joie de nous revoir ce matin?

— Oh! si... si... j'éprouve une grande joie, sanglota Mme Lourmel, j'éprouve une joie immense...

Et, se laissant retomber, brisée, dans son fauteuil, la vieille dame ajouta d'un ton dont ni Lyonnnette ni Paul ne pouvaient saisir l'ironie douloureuse:

— Seulement... ne me causez plus jamais une autre joie aussi grande que celle-ci...

— Parce que?

— ...Parce que j'en mourrais!

Les jeunes gens se regardèrent, encore plus étonnés, et répétèrent l'un après l'autre, dans un hochement de tête:

— Ah! que vous êtes drôle, maman!

— Ah! maman, que tu es drôle!



THE MASKERS

THE great gods in their merriment
Made man a naked thing,
For all the winds of discontent
And thorns of love to sting.

They made him as a chord to thrill,
Vibrant to joy and pain;
They made him as a reed whose will
Is bent by any rain.

They made him as a glass revealed
For every mood to dim,
Then gave him laughter as a shield
Between the world and him;

And gave him robe of words to hide
The naked soul, afraid,
And cloak of jests that none beside
Might know this man they made.

So hidden 'mongst our kind we press,
That scarce the great gods know
Who wears the mask of happiness
Upon the face of woe.

MC CREA PICKERING.

“AD ASTRA PER ASPERA”

By Lefa Field Hubbell

TWO years' residence in the Philippines will fill the heart of the most childlike and bland with a fury of restlessness that much resembles a wilderness of tiger-cats. Within the withered bit of *lignum vitæ* which serves for a heart may be concentrated the very essence of longing, a world of regret for the native land so far away, and an awful, maddening nostalgia which eats into the mind like a slowly dripping stream of acid. At a word, a gesture, one will wax mutinous and belligerent, or, without a moment's warning, from the most vigorous energy subside into inert lassitude and sullen silence.

Captain Evans lay on an army cot before his salangi-screened windows for days, and longed with a furious, all-consuming intensity, for the broad expanses of dazzling white snow which had been his chief delight when a boy in dear old New England; and he saw, for days interminable, clustering green cocoanuts among the swaying palms, and bright splotches of gorgeous scarlet hibiscus against soft, tropical mosses and long-swinging, delicate ferns. To look upon beautiful flowers and luxuriant verdure beneath bright patches of scorching sunshine, when the heart pines for two feet of soft, cold snow and the merry jingle of sleigh-bells, is exasperating, to say the least; especially when one is tossing in the most excruciating agony in a furnace of dengue fever, complicated by a few other tropical maladies, and the Moros are adding to the tension with long, monotonous threnodies which sound like death-chants. Certainly, it is not the most comfortable thing in the world to lie

in a little nipa house, chewing ice like a coffee-mill, and fanning yourself at the rate of twenty miles an hour, while the post *medico* fills you up on phenacetin and tells you to “keep quiet.” But when, in the midst of it all, your fiancée sends you a message that she has arrived in Manila, and asks you to come and get her—well, if there is any self-respecting man who could abstain from expressing his nefarious sentiments, he is unworthy to wear the shoulder-straps of an officer of the American Army.

“Here, you rypophagus beast,” Evans sputtered, shaking his hot head as might an impatient charger charging at the bit, as he watched a gaily beturbaned Moro slip among the tangle of underbrush that surrounded his domicile, “get away from there. Oh, I see you—I see your dirty red-and-yellow turban out there in the reeds. Potai! Potai!” he called to his Moro servant, “hand me that Mauser. I’ll teach them to come slinking around here. Yes, I can do a little shooting myself. You had *better* run, you black-skinned *carabao*, or I’ll make the neatest little hole through you that ever Moro got in the Philippines. You’ll be proud of it. And, just to show you that I can shoot, I’ll send a bullet through that gaudy head-dress of yours. Potai, go and see if I scared him to death.”

“Great heavens, man, what are you trying to do—commit suicide?” Dr. Hammond gasped, bursting into the room at the sound of the shot. “Just when I was trying to get a little sleep, too! What’s wrong—not an attack?”

But Evans flung his still smoking

Mauser upon the white *petate* at the doctor's feet, closed his lips with a firmness no lever could budge, and turned his face away in determined silence.

"Bah! you are simply too stubborn for any use; you are like an intractable child," the doctor said, turning on his heel and walking to a far window. "Are you never going to get over this streak of sullenness?"

"No, I'm not," Evans blurted out, with trenchant ire. "I know you are disgusted. You think that I am childish and stubborn, and that I have an infamous, abominable temper. But I'm not, I'm——"

"No, you are not," Hammond interrupted, mockingly. "You have the most amiable disposition of any man I have ever known. You are simply charming; it is a pleasure to be with you."

"Oh, it is, is it?" Evans glanced witheringly at the doctor. "I think you ought to have an ordinary amount of sympathy for a brother officer who is down with dengue, whose every bone feels as if it had been through a torturing mill, and whose head is burning up with fever; who can't get out and fight with his men, like a soldier, or stay in the house and have any peace, like a decent sick man, with Moros peering their black faces in first one window and then another, and cholera all about one so that you won't let a man have anything he wants to eat. Not that I'm hungry—the Lord knows I wish I were!—but just to show how hard and unfeeling you are. Besides, I ought to be half-way to Manila by this time, and here we are so far away from civilization that there will not be a transport, or even a commercial steamer, for a month, I suppose. If that isn't hell, what is it?"

"Well, I don't know," the doctor agreed, utterly vanquished. "It certainly is pretty tough luck, and I can see only one thing to do—be patient."

"Patient!" Evans stormed, lifting himself on his elbow and glaring at his friend from fever-bright eyes. "Haven't I been patient? Did you

ever see me when I *wasn't* patient? I think if there was ever a living example of 'patience on a monument,' I have been it. But I won't be, any longer. Look at me. Do I appear to be a man who would lie down and die with a smile on his face because you told him to be resigned? No, sir; I'm going to show you what will-power can do. Potai, bring my clean clothes."

"Potai, leave the room," the doctor countermanded, pointing a lank finger at the open door.

The Moro glanced appealingly, first at his master, who sat trembling with excitement on the edge of his cot, and then at the *medico*, who, Potai had long since learned, was a man to be both feared and respected, since the wisdom of Potai's philosophy taught him to respect anything stronger than himself. He slunk sleepily out.

The doctor walked over to the captain's side, and, linking his strong arm in the weak one of his friend, gently assisted him to rise to his feet, saying, pleasantly:

"You really need a curtain lecture, Jim, but I'm tired of talking to you, so I am going to let you have your own way about things—until you realize your folly. I see that is the only way to do. Now, stand there while I get your clothes." And he started away in the direction of an adjoining room.

As he reached the door, he fully expected to hear his patient's peevish tongue heap abuse upon him. He turned back to see whether the sick man's face betrayed anger or delight; but he was disappointed. Evans stood there, reeling, but with jaws set and underlip thrust out, while he clung tightly to the bamboo pole which supported the mosquito-netting.

Hammond was amused. He wondered how long Evans would hold out. He went on into the other room, and busied himself with Evans's laundry, which lay spread out on the bed. He selected a full suit of attire, and returned to the sick-room, to find the captain seated on a chair, pulling on his stockings.

Hammond wondered what he ought to do. "Here, take those off," he said, peremptorily, stepping in front of the captain. "And you had better go back to bed just as soon as you can get there."

Evans looked up, half-pleadingly, half-menacingly.

"I'm not a child, Hammond; I'm not a plaything, an ignoramus," he snarled. "I'm a man, I tell you, and I am tired of being stretched out on an army cot till further notice. I am all right; there is nothing the matter with me. A fever! Great Scott, man, I'll have the delirium tremens if I lie there any longer. Give a fellow a rest, won't you?"

"No, Jim, you are going straight back to bed, or I shall simply carry you there by main force."

"I am going to Manila, I tell you!" Evans shrieked, wildly. "I am going to Manila!"

Hammond caught his friend's emaciated form just as it lurched forward, the febrile fingers grasping frantically for support. He bore him, trembling in every limb, back to his bed, and ministered to his comfort with the thoughtfulness and care of one trained to relieve the sufferings of others.

For three days Evans tossed in a delirium of fever and pain, the doctor watching by his side incessantly, indefatigably. On the morning of the fourth day, after a long, restful slumber, the captain opened his eyes, and, searching Hammond's face eagerly, asked:

"What did she say, Hammond?"

"Who?"

"Grace—Miss Halstead. Bring me her answer, please."

"What answer?" the doctor was forced to ask.

"Why, the reply to my telegram. I wired her to wait in Manila for me, you know. Or did I? I intended to."

"A message came for you, signed Halstead, asking when you would come, and I answered it, saying you were ill."

"She will understand, then," Evans

said, wearily, but his face was whiter than before, and a cold moisture lay on his forehead, like dew on damp parchment. He reached out one long, patrician hand, and laid it lightly on the doctor's brown fingers, as he asked, almost pleadingly, "Hammond, how soon do you think I shall be able to be out?"

"In a week, possibly. I spoke to the major about your taking a little trip on the water. He is planning an attack on Bocolod for the twentieth, and wants you here then; but he says that you may take the first boat out if you can return in time for that. He doesn't want you to do field work; I told him you would not be strong enough for that. He wants to leave you in command of the camp here, and he will take Bickham and a 'shave-tail.'"

"I presume there will not be a boat in for a month," Evans soliloquized.

"The *Liscum* is reported due about the tenth," the doctor volunteered, by way of encouragement.

"That will give me just ten days. I can't possibly make the trip to Manila in that time, can I?"

"You ought to be able to do so, if you make the round trip on her."

Those ten days of convalescence were more like two years than any other time of similar duration that Evans had ever known. He sent a message to Manila, asking Miss Halstead to wait for him; but no answer came—not even the assurance that she ever received it. The operator traced the message, and reported that it had gone no farther than Zamboanga; that the cable connecting Mindanao with Negros was broken and would not be repaired for several days.

Evans was in a frenzy of unrest; and finally, when he heard the three blasts of the steamer's whistle that announced her arrival—sooner than expected, too, by three days—he was frantic with excitement. He insisted upon getting his things in his stateroom immediately, though she would not leave port until the day following. He even considered the possibility of

ousting the boat's captain and steaming away northward, himself at the helm.

At last the anchor was pulled up, and the *Liscum* pushed out of port with Evans standing amid a shower of tropical flowers and good wishes.

Poor Evans! During the long days beneath the glowing rays of the tropical sun and the long nights beneath the refulgent splendor of the Orient moon, he sat on deck, and dreamed and planned and rejoiced, ecstatic with a new happiness which was leaping, lambent, longing. To have her, after years of waiting! Truly, the gods are good! How would she receive him? He wondered, with something like regret, if he could not capture her by blood and rapine and carry her off to the gorgeous splendor of the conqueror's tent. He pictured how she would look in the dainty, soft fabrics of the East. It struck him curiously that he had never seen her in a Summer gown. When he came home from West Point she was in Europe, and when she returned it was in the Winter-time. He could not recall ever having seen her in white. How beautiful she would be with filmy laces about her slender throat and ylang-ylang blossoms in her scented hair!

When they passed Corregidor and pulled up to the mouth of the Pasig, he was like one distraught with overthinking. He took the first tumbled-down *carromata* he could succeed in signaling, and drove to the Oriente Hotel. She had given the name of that hostelry as her address. He was wild-eyed and eager as he rushed into the office and, fumbling the register nervously, asked for Miss Halstead.

"Miss Halstead?" the clerk queried. "No; she left seven or eight days ago." "Left!" Evans exclaimed. "Great Scott, man, where did she go?"

"She had her things put on board the *Don Engracio*. She must have gone south some place."

Evans dragged himself back to the boat with an effort; he felt completely crushed. There was an imprecation

on his lips and a bitter pang in his heart. And, by way of a sauce piquant to his already wounded feelings, he was told that the *Liscum* would go into quarantine the next morning at dawn, for five days.

Quarantine! And for five days! Those five days would eat up every minute of the time allotted him; not one moment's residue would he have. Besides, at the end of five days, where would Grace be? If she had left for Mindanao seven or eight days ago, she would be there by this time. A cold perspiration oozed from his brow and trickled down his cheeks. He wondered if the cable had been repaired, and speculated upon the possibility of getting a message to the telegraph office, in order to warn Hammond of Grace's arrival, if she were not already there.

Meantime—in fact, the day after Evans left the camp—Hammond stood in his quarters, puzzling over a cablegram which read:

EVANS,
—th Infantry, U. S. Army,
Camp —, Mindanao.
Shall wait no longer. Coming on *Don Engracio*.

GRACE.

Hammond looked at the date—May tenth.

"Why," he said to himself, "if I wired her to Cebu in care of the captain of the *Don*—if she can catch a boat, she can get back to Manila almost as soon as Jim gets there."

So he sent the following message:

MISS HALSTEAD,
Care of S. S. *Don Engracio*,
Cebu, Cebu, P. I.

Evans left here for Manila on the tenth. Oriente Hotel.

HAMMOND.

"Such a mix-up!" Hammond expostulated. "Evans always did have the devil's own luck."

Evans had just settled himself in his steamer-chair and, with his campaign hat pulled down far over his eyes, was looking out upon the dolphins at play and the rippling waters,

when the quarantine officer's launch pulled up alongside.

"Who is this Evans?" the officer asked of the *Liscum's* captain. "I have a telegram for him. I believe I know him." And he ran up the stairs, a look of recognition in his face as he saw Evans lying back in the steamer-chair.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, reproachfully, "and you were in Manila without looking me up!"

Evans grasped his hand warmly. "I have been in a seething caldron of ill-luck, Jameson. I never experienced such a concatenation of misfortunes in my life."

Jameson handed him the telegram. Evans seized it as he would pluck a wild bird from the limb of a tree, suddenly, eagerly, for fear it would escape before he could capture it.

"You will pardon me, won't you, Jameson? I simply must see what new disappointment I must encounter," he said, extracting the message from its brick-red envelope. It read:

EVANS,

Oriente Hotel,
Manila.

Are you trying to escape? Wherever you are, for goodness' sake stay there. I am returning on the *Isla de Rama*.

GRACE.

"Jameson, you're a jewel! Jameson, you're the best friend I ever had in my life! Read that," he exclaimed, thrusting the fluttering yellow sheet into Jameson's hand.

Jameson read it, and looked blankly at his friend. "Well?" he asked, awaiting enlightenment.

"Doesn't that explain itself?"

"Not any too eloquently."

"Well, you have saved my life by bringing me this message before it was too late. Now I can go ashore and wait for her, and we can go together, after all. She is sure to be here before we sail, and I shall not have to lose any time. You see, I really ought to be back now, but this quarantine is a great institution, isn't it?"

"You are the first person I ever heard say so. But one thing is sure;

now that you are here you have to stay here. Not even the captain himself can go ashore. I don't see, myself, but what you are in a worse pickle than ever," Jameson added, dubiously, stroking his beard.

"You don't mean that they can force me to stay on board when I want to go ashore?"

"Certainly, if you want to go on this boat. And, furthermore, the young lady can't come aboard, after being at an infected port, without going into quarantine for five days."

Evans paced the deck and tore his hair, heaping invectives upon the fates that so persistently defeated him.

"But there must be some way out of it. Heavens, man," he said, stopping suddenly in front of his old friend, "you are the quarantine officer, and can't help me out of this scrape! Try to think of something."

"There is just one thing that can be done. To let you ashore would be all that my position is worth. Guards pace the wharves day and night, so there is no smuggling you in. But I'll tell you what I think will work. When I go out to meet the *Isla de Rama*, I'll see the young lady, and explain matters to her. Better still, you can write her a letter and I will deliver it; and, if she wishes, I will bring her, bag and baggage, straight out to the *Liscum*. If she doesn't go on shore in Manila, she will be able to come aboard and not interfere with the quarantine regulations, because she is not coming from an infected port."

"That's the scheme!" Evans cried, with avidity, wringing Jameson's hand. "Jameson, you're a brick! When do you expect the *Isla de Rama*?"

"No word has come yet. She may arrive at any minute, or she may not come for days. The sea is rough now, especially out of Cebu; they are having some pretty heavy typhoons down there."

When Jameson left, Evans watched the little launch, flying the yellow flag at one end and the stars and stripes

at the other, speed away over the calm waters and disappear among a labyrinth of native cascos and bancas.

Later in the day, in response to the captain of the *Liscum's* call, "What news?" an incoming vessel megaphoned that the *Isla de Rama* was on the rocks some forty miles out of the bay, and that the government launch, with the customs inspector aboard, had gone out to offer assistance. The captain knew of Evans's troubles, and sympathized with him as much as he was capable of sympathizing with any one. He immediately conveyed the news to his passenger, and expressed his profound regret that accident had happened just when he was expecting the fruition of his hopes. Still, it might mean but a little delay.

Toward evening, Evans was exercising on the deck, when the captain sent for him to come up on the bridge. As Evans ascended the ladder, he saw the captain looking out at sea and gazing intently, through his long-distance glasses, at a small launch that steamed rapidly by, with a girl in white sitting serenely in the prow. Evans caught up another pair of glasses, and adjusted the range. Undoubtedly, the young lady was Miss Halstead. But, oh, horror of horrors, Jameson was nowhere to be seen, and at the girl's side stood a fat little man dressed in khaki.

"Who is that man there?" Evans demanded of the captain.

"That is the customs inspector."

"Oh! Where is your megaphone? I must call to her."

"I haven't any aboard," the captain answered. He pulled a brass air-funnel from its socket, and handed it to Evans. "I use this sometimes."

Evans snatched it, and called through it with all his might, "Boat ahoy!" There was no response, and not the slightest change in the position of the little group on the launch. "Boat ahoy! Boat ahoy!" he shouted, until he was red in the face; but still no answer came, and the boat steamed farther and farther away, making as straight for Manila as she could steer. To Evans, at that moment, Manila

was the land of the damned. He would rather have seen his fiancée step over the border-line into perdition than alight on the wharf at Manila: it was the one place in the world to be shunned. He was like a prisoner in a dungeon, as impotent, as desperate. Plainly, there was but one thing to do—jump into the water and swim after her. He might never reach her; the probabilities were a hundred against one that he never would; but he could not stand there in helpless rage.

Still, he did stand there, overwhelmed by the series of calamities that had overtaken him, watching the fast-disappearing launch. He took up the captain's glasses again, and riveted his eyes to their cool rims, gazing as though he half expected to see some wonderful miracle performed. To his absolute consternation and surprise, the prow of the launch scarcely touched the wharf when he saw a puff of smoke, a spout of steam, and the little vessel backed off, turned around, and pointed her nose as straight as an arrow toward the *Liscum*. He looked but an instant longer, but in that instant recognized the still, white figure sitting calmly where he had last seen her.

He flung the glasses aside, and rushed down the stairs at break-neck speed, made a wild scramble in his stateroom for a clean collar and fresh coat, and appeared at the rail just as the launch drew up alongside.

While the stairs of the *Liscum* were being lowered, Evans stood and stared like an idiot at the radiant creature who looked up at him, crimson with burning blushes.

"Why don't you come down and get her, you chump?" Jameson prompted. Evans had not noticed him before.

"Oh, no!" Grace interposed, warningly—the little minx! "You can't come down, or you will break the quarantine, you know."

"I'll come as far as I dare," Evans said, pallid with excitement. "Give me your hand, and I will pull you up."

"No, I *can't* come up," Grace said,

leaning tantalizingly on the rail out of his reach, and actually glorying in his anguish. "I went ashore. They won't let me come on board with you."

"Then I'll go back to Manila with you—that settles it," he said, with determination. "Hang the army, and the quarantine, and everything else. I'll not be cheated this way." He ran down the rest of the steps to the launch's side, and, springing aboard, clasped Grace's hands fiercely in his.

"Now, behave yourself," she reminded him, eying him suspiciously. "Where is your hat?"

"Hang the hat, too! I can get another."

"I refuse to go with you unless you have a hat," she said, leaning back against the rail and patting her little foot on the deck.

"You will have to. You want to get away while I go back and get it. No, Miss Lady, I'll stay right here."

"All right," Grace cried, gaily, bounding on the steps and running up to the deck of the larger vessel. "You may stay there, if you wish, but I'm going to Mindanao on the *Liscum*. Will you send my things up, Mr. Jameson, please?"

Evans stared.

"You chump!" Jameson said, slapping him on the back and laughing heartily. "Wake up! You don't think I'd go back on you that way, do you? When I saw the launch coming I made a dash for it, yelling to Miss Halstead at the top of my voice not to come ashore. I just got there in time, and—" But Evans was gone. Jameson turned to the natives lounging lazily around. "Here, you black imps, get the lady's things up there. *Ala! Siguel! Pronto!*"

As the launch sped away, Jameson waved his cap to the two figures leaning over the rail, but they never knew it.



"NOBLESSE OBLIGE"

I AM not fair, but since you made
That sweet, sad song about my eyes,
I see strange glory in the shade,
Fresh beauty in the domèd skies;
I dry my tears, I stay my sighs.

I am not brave, but you have placed
This test of courage in my way,
And every nerve is strong and braced
To meet the pain you cannot stay;
So, I grow braver every day.

I am not good, yet you have laid
This gift of honor on my breast—
This gift that has all woe outweighed.
Now that your great love is confessed,
I have no fear—I only rest.

I am not fair, or brave, or good,
Yet since your love thus deemeth me,
Love's presence o'er my soul doth brood,
Till, dimly, the divine I see.
But you—you have not understood!

CONSTANCE FARMAR.

THE LOVE-LETTER

YOU ask for a love-letter, sweet, my sweet,
 You who are one with all the pulse and beat,
 The lure and flowerful loveliness, of Spring,
 Its sunlight and its laughter, and the ring
 Of low and liquid music. In my heart
 Are singing words that flutter and that start
 Toward trembling utterance at the thought of you;
 Yet ere I voice them—every one as true
 As stars are to the midnight with no cloud—
 They join and jostle in so close a crowd
 That, haply, when you hear them you will say,
 "He but half loves me, else in clearer way
 Would he the height and depth of love disclose."
 You would not ask the rose to limn the rose,
 The sunset to describe its varied beam;
 Then why the heart to picture its one dream
 Ineffable? Yet, since you ask it, I
 Must bid my heart, as best it may, comply!

You ask for a love-letter, love, my love;
 Ah, well, I know it should be woven of
 Moonlight and melody; gold rays and chords
 Such as breathe softly over shaded swards
 When twilight steals across the face of day,
 About the midmost of enamoured May.
 And there should be within it fused and caught
 All delicacy and fragrances of thought
 Such as about you linger evermore.
 There should be rapt and radiant metaphor—
 How you are like the wind-flower in your grace;
 How sunshine plays at frolic o'er your face
 With shadowy pensiveness; how your sweet eyes
 Mirror the depths of Summer-morning skies.

You ask for a love-letter. Ah, my own,
 For all you miss let my intent atone—
 My high intent that still must fall below
 What I would win to so that you might know
 The scope of adoration, and the whole
 Love-wealth of worship dwelling in my soul.

SENNETT STEPHENS.



IT takes money to make the mare go; but it takes more money to make the automobile go.

A BACHELOR DINNER

By Edward Boltwood

"I SAY, this is a piece of luck!" cried Lyman Dalrymple, balancing on the curb-stone and peering into his cousin's brougham. "Is it really you, Edith, and alone?"

"It is I, alone, and perished with hunger. However, luncheon waits. May I drive you up-town somewhere?" asked Miss Vance.

"I was nearly sure it was you, but I'm blind without my glasses." Dalrymple wrenched at the handle of the carriage door. "Confound this catch!" he exclaimed.

Miss Vance reached out a rather boyish hand, and twisted the knob. "Where to?" said she.

Dalrymple meditatively surveyed the jostle of Broadway. He had a thin and unbearded face on which twenty-odd years had stamped no readable record except a sensitive alertness in keeping with his slight, nervous figure.

"I'll tell you," said he. "Would you mind dropping me at the Café Altruria?"

"Not in the least. Speak to the driver." And she made room for Dalrymple on the seat beside her.

Dalrymple was not unaware of a faint flutter of embarrassment as he took the vacant place. He had by no means lost that curious dismay which a man feels when confronted by the sudden discovery that he has become a lover, that his boastful heart is, after all, not a shade out of ordinary. Moreover, Dalrymple was given to the useless self-analysis of a dilettante. He looked at Edith Vance as they rolled over the asphalt of the Avenue that morning, and wondered how he had known his cousin for a whole season and had known himself only for the past fortnight.

Miss Vance's prolonged convent breeding had left her singularly young, even for the enviable age of nineteen. Her adventurous gray eyes greeted the world with a receptive readiness which alarmed the judiciously observant; the profile of her chin was over-salient; her fair beauty, in short, was that of a young Apollo on a cameo, and the picture was accentuated by the crisp nestling of her coppery hair.

"I'm arranging for a stag dinner to-night at this restaurant place," said Dalrymple. "The dinner is for a little club I used to belong to. It's called the Perpetual Bachelors' Club."

"How frightful!" laughed the girl, wrinkling her brows.

"Isn't it? The Perpetual Bachelors' Club is a stupid and flat relic of Sophomore year. The dinner is to celebrate my resignation."

"I don't believe in resigning from anything unless under compulsion."

"Well, the other members claim I'm not in good standing."

Of course, the innuendo was clumsy, but Dalrymple did not regret it when he saw a faint response of color on her cheeks.

"You must have been a cynical Sophomore. My brother Hugh is a Sophomore, but he plays too much football to be cynical."

"This is the cynic's penalty." He pulled a slip of paper from his pocket. "Listen: melons and trout, and mushrooms and something *casserole*—a *soufflé Robespierre*, and an ice. Not bad for a Summer evening. There is the Altruria on the corner."

"Your dinner sounds attractive," said Miss Vance, thoughtfully. She gazed through the waving green win-

dow-plants into the white-and-silver quiet of the dining-room. "Do you know—do you know, Lyman, I believe that is precisely the menu I shall have for luncheon!"

"The Vance chef is capable—but a *soufflé Robespierre*—"

"Oh, I don't mean at home—I mean here," interposed Edith.

Dalrymple whistled.

"Don't be so shocked," she went on. "If you are afraid——"

A plain challenge danced in the gray eyes. "Discretion breeds contempt," reflected Dalrymple, weakly.

"It isn't a question of being afraid," said he, "but I fancy you don't understand what you're doing. The Altruria is at times a bit rowdyish."

"Are you afraid?" she insisted.

"No—if you are not."

"Then come on, you Mrs. Grundy." And she descended gaily from the cab.

Dalrymple stifled his scruples. Having failed to do the proper thing with firmness, he decided that it was wise to do the improper thing with enthusiasm. Perhaps a luncheon *à deux* with one's cousin does not smash the social decalogue. He piloted Miss Vance briskly to a table near an alcove, and presented his memorandum to a waiter, bidding him serve that list for two.

"Dear me, not all of it!" protested his guest.

While she made a selection of the items, Dalrymple inspected their neighbors in the half-filled dining-room. He knew none of them. They seemed, too, quite respectable. An exception, possibly, was a couple at a table across the alcove. The woman was of a common type, handsome after her hard fashion, in a severe black gown of which the simplicity had an oddly ostentatious effect; her escort was a well-dressed man of middle-age, tall, heavy and deliberate. In the recess behind Dalrymple's chair was a low platform, and on it a dozen music-racks menaced the peace of the apartment.

"We must move, Edith," said he. "The fiddlers will be scraping in our ears."

"I don't object—and behold the melon."

"Will madame serve?" chirped the fatherly waiter.

"Without doubt, Alphonse," laughed Edith. "Madame will serve and prevent monsieur from stuffing himself. Do you believe," she added, under her breath, "that in Alphonse's mind we are a husband and——?"

She hesitated unreasonably. Lyman was squinting at her through his glass of Rhine wine.

"Let us have iced tea," she proposed. "We would have iced tea at our home, you know."

"Right away, madame," and Alphonse scurried.

"You're impolite to stare so," remarked Miss Vance. "I hope you're shocked—because I'm not."

"Oh, no," said Dalrymple, slowly. "I'm not thinking of that. I'm thinking how very agreeable it was to hear you say 'our home.'"

Indeed, he trusted whimsically that she was affected somehow by the subtle domestic savor of the situation. It might have been a wild trick of his fantastic imagination, but when Edith filled the frosted glasses from the tea-pot and sifted in the sugar, he fancied that he read in her expression a certain delicate consciousness of his own dream. Who knows? The psychological moment has occurred at less seemly places than the Café Altruria. The violins began to tune in the alcove.

A vague feminine rustle from the tables welcomed the appearance of the orchestra, and Dalrymple shifted his chair so that he could see the players. The leader, a dapper Italian in a tight, scarlet uniform, faced the diners. It was obvious that he was a fellow of prodigious conquests. His black eyes roved insolently among the women. As he drew the bow, he swayed his lithe body like a red whip to the refrain.

"Allow me to present my friend, Don Juan. A pocket edition in crimson calf," announced Dalrymple, solemnly, and at that second Edith

caught the black eyes and could not help laughing outright at their manoeuvres. To her innocent consternation the Italian's bow paused in mid-air while he leered a tender acknowledgment.

Miss Vance was already a somewhat conspicuous figure in the dining-room. Her apparent exchange of salutations with the violinist made a subdued and significant buzz of talk which did not escape Dalrymple, and he pushed back his chair doubtfully.

"Hang such impudence!" he said. "People are looking, Edith. Come, change places with me. Turn your back on the fool."

"And make them look all the more? No, thank you." Miss Vance was quite self-possessed again.

The sense of her objection did not smooth Dalrymple's pique. He was angry at his own indecision. What should he have done when the fiddler leered at Edith? The trivial problem tortured his sensitive nature abnormally. Make a ridiculous, vulgar scene—in a public restaurant? The idea sickened him. But had she set him down as too tamely complacent? That was an idea which sickened him still more. Miss Vance noted her cousin's puzzled scowl.

"Ah, monsieur has jealousy," she complained to the carafe. "And the mushrooms are perfect. This is the finest bachelor dinner I ever attended. Don't sulk, Lyman. Are you going to challenge Don Juan?"

"If you think I ought to," said Dalrymple, stabbing an olive.

"That's a business which men usually decide for themselves, or I'm mistaken. My warlike monsieur may challenge Don Juan if he chooses. *Hélas* for madame! The fickle creature has transferred his affections."

Thus it happened that both Dalrymple and Edith were watching the table across the alcove when the woman in black tossed the violets.

The episode was over in half the time required to tell of it. The woman picked three or four flowers

from her belt, and flung them languidly at the Italian conductor. They fell on his violin. He ceased playing, bowed forward a few steps, gathered the violets in his free hand, and pressed them to his heart with a laughable and extravagant gallantry of gesture. The big man at the woman's table lumbered promptly to his feet, as if he had rehearsed the part. He extended his long arm and grasped the musician's wrist, crunching it so that the blossoms dribbled to the floor. Thereupon, he wheeled to the woman and flicked her sharply in the face with his thick fingers.

She made no sign of protest, except to mask one cheek in her black gloves. The leader, after a single hurt sob of dismay, automatically resumed his share in the final strain of the "Intermezzo." The big man sat down, serene, unperturbed by the shrill hum of comment.

"The abominable coward!" said Edith.

"Delicious, wasn't it?" chuckled Dalrymple. "Take care—your voice carries."

"But I call it abominable."

Dalrymple stared at her, blankly. A sudden hush followed the end of the "Intermezzo."

"I call him an abominable coward," repeated Miss Vance, distinctly.

"Good heavens, Edith," stammered Dalrymple, "don't be preposterous! Remember where——"

His words faltered, helplessly, for the girl's chin was set, her shoulders squared, her eyes defiantly bright.

"Don't you agree with me?" she demanded.

Before she could fashion a reply, the tall man had straightened up and crossed to their table, tugging at his close-cropped mustache. He spoke ponderously, with the immovable poise of a person sure of his ground. Dalrymple half rose, biting his lips.

"Excuse me, ma'am, for talking to you," began the stranger. "That there was just my cure for foolishness. I'd do it again a hundred times. I heard

what name you called me. I guess you meant for me to hear it."

"Yes," said Edith, coolly; "I hope you heard it."

The man grinned with mechanical politeness. "It's a name I'm not stuck on," he drawled. "Coming from a lady, I can't do more than tell her she's wrong. Coming from anybody else——"

There was a tentative pause, a pause that was destined to torment Dalrymple's memory for many days. He felt, rather than saw, the almost eager expectancy in Edith's glance. He knew that in this contention, however paltry and cheap, she was waiting on his masculine readiness. And he flinched.

"I don't care to argue, sir," hesitated Dalrymple.

"Well, excuse me again for speaking. No offense." And he leisurely retired.

"The outrageous cad!" gasped Dalrymple, choking down his impotent rage. "I owe you a thousand pardons for bringing you here."

"Oh, that was my scheme," asserted Miss Vance. "I'm to blame for it all. But I never saw a woman struck in the face by a man's fist. It strips things somehow—a blow like that."

"But there is nothing one can do—under the circumstances."

"Oh, nothing."

"And the woman may have deserved it, to judge by externals."

Miss Vance drew the verbena from her finger-bowl, and tore it into shreds, reflectively.

"I confess I'm stupid," she acknowledged, "but I don't understand how these men here could endure the cowardice of that bully. If Hugh could have seen it——"

Dalrymple winced.

"What would he have done?" he rejoined, hastily. "Start a public row with such a cad? Surely he knows better."

"I understand, of course. It is vulgar and rather disgusting. I'll drive up-town, if you are through."

Dalrymple walked with her to the street.

"I intend to go back there and teach that beast a lesson in manners," he declared, as he closed the door of the brougham.

"Oh, no, don't think of it, Lyman," said she, wearily. "What could you teach that giant brute?"

"I'm sorry for the little affair. As you say, it has been unspeakably vulgar and tawdry."

"Yes. Good-bye."

But Dalrymple met her eyes and read them. For reason or not, she had found him lacking, irredeemably lacking, in an essential of manliness. The message was written plain as print.

The woman in black, with her companion, had vanished from the café. While Dalrymple was paying the check the smirking head-waiter ventured an apology, and in his voice Dalrymple's supersensitive ears seemed to catch a mocking note. He strolled moodily up the Avenue.

His self-reproaches were not less bitter because they might be undeserved. Edith thought, rightly or wrongly, that he had shrunk, and a doubt of his chivalry is one of the doubts a man finds hard to forgive. Dalrymple had failed to call a brute to account for striking a woman's face. Circumstances and surroundings went for nothing. As Miss Vance put it, that blow stripped things, somehow; the proprieties faded against the coarse, primitive coloring of the background; the impact of that fist was a brazen summons to the strong to protect the weak. That the weak in this case was a worthless courtesan did not affect the crude balances in which Edith had weighed Dalrymple's bravery and found it wanting.

He sketched mental pictures of what he might have done in the restaurant. What would Hugh Vance have done? Questioned the other's conduct openly? He heard the foul epithets of the tall man, the sound of the struggle, the screams of the women, the babble of the waiters as they parted the adversaries. He saw himself bleeding and ludicrous and Edith shamed, and he

saw the yellow insults of the morning papers, and the very spine of his being crept.

Miss Vance and Dalrymple never referred to the incident. Their relations immediately were readjusted on the safe basis of cousinship; their budding romance withered and died after that

luncheon at the Altruria. Eventually, Dalrymple forgot to fret. He was such a cheerful usher at Edith's wedding that a sympathetic matron, to whom he had once confided his attachment for the bride, told him that he was a very brave man. Dalrymple smiled a trifle grimly.



LOOKING SEAWARD

WHERE the white gulls gather and part,
 Circle and settle and scream;
 Where the sails are red as a heart,
 And the high cliffs purple as dream,
 Some one is looking seaward—
 South and east all day,
 For a break on the far horizon
 Of topsails alift and gray.

Where the green tides crawl and lift,
 Sob and whisper and run;
 Where the foam-clots spin and drift,
 Red and white in the sun,
 Some one is looking seaward,
 With eyes grown vigil-dim,
 For a flake of climbing canvas
 Over the crawling rim.

Where the thin smoke wavers and clears
 The pitch of the beaten roof;
 Where the stages drip with tears,
 And the dories swing aloof,
 Some one is harkening seaward—
 South and east all night,
 For a slatting of jibs in the narrows,
 And the gleam of a starboard light.

We sing that a mariner's wife
 A mariner's star should be,
 To guide him in from the fishing,
 And lure him up from the sea;
 But mark you the seaward singing,
 The crying of ship and bark,
 Where the Sea Queen calls her lovers
 Down to the dream and the dark.

THEODORE ROBERTS.

HUSBAND AND WIFE

REACH out your arms, and hold me close and fast;
 Tell me you had no memories of your past,
 That mar this love of ours so great, so vast.

Some truths are cheapened, when too oft averred.
 Does not the deed speak louder than the word?
(Dear Christ, that old dream woke again, and stirred!)

As you love me, you never loved before?
 Though oft you say it, say it yet once more.
 My heart is jealous of those days of yore.

Sweet wife, dear comrade, mother of my child,
 My life is yours, by memory undefiled.
(It stirs again, that passion brief and wild!)

You never knew such happy hours as this—
 We two alone, our hearts surcharged with bliss?
 Nor other kisses, sweet as my own kiss?

I was a thirsty field, long parched with drouth,
 You were the warm rain blowing from the south.
(But, oh, the crimson madness of her mouth!)

You would not, if you could, go down life's track,
 For just one little moment, and bring back
 Some vanished rapture, that you miss or lack?

I am content; you are my life, my all.
*(One burning hour, but one could I recall—
 God! how men lie when driven to the wall!)*

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



WHAT MANNER OF MAN?

MRS. BROWN—How are you getting along?

MRS. JONES—Splendidly. Charles has two schemes that can't bring less than \$1,000,000 each, and a ten-dollar-a-week job.



TO find the woman in the case look for the fool she has victimized.

PYRRHA'S HUSBAND'S AFFAIR

By Cecil Charles

"MY wife commissioned me to find you," he explained. "She heard this morning you were here. And Chris?"

"Oh, Chris sailed last week," she answered, smiling.

"Indeed?" Bainbridge never was surprised. "Then news doesn't fly so fast." He perceived that this cousin by marriage was not unattractive, and the thought shed altering light on a hitherto contemptuous opinion. He had seen little of the couple since their marriage five years before when it had annoyed him to think that a good-for-nothing like Chris Bainbridge could always find some enthusiastic simpleton to adore him, while steady-going, successful men, who not only did not consume their patrimony in follies but increased it to notable proportions, were sometimes less fortunate. Coming over through the low hills from the neighboring village where his country house stood in its great park, he had recalled this annoyance—not with any personal feeling, for Pyrrha had proved the excellent wife and mother to his babe the gossips of her native town had predicted sixteen years since; and things had altered in those sixteen years. He was a rich man now. Still, he had his cares, his gloomy moments, and that very morning had given his wife a moody answer, when at breakfast she had said, in her melodious voice, her eyes upon a letter, "It seems that Cousin Chris and his wife have returned from the West. Mrs. Walton writes me Cousin Elise is over there."

"My letter is from Myrtle," he had

answered, glumly; "she wants to stay another week."

"Dear Myrtle," the lady had assented. "Cousin Elise is boarding on Hawthorne Hill. It must be dull. If you are out with the auto, why not call and bring her back?"

Bainbridge had frowned and nodded. Toward noon he had visited his stables, spoken sharply to the hostler, left directions for a new chauffeur expected, glared at the traveling car he dared not take out alone, and finally tucked himself into his runabout to steam away.

"Then news doesn't fly so fast," he repeated. "We thought you arrived yesterday. Hope you are comfortable—" He glanced around. In his youth, he had known village parlors—nightmares. This one was quiet, and any ordinary apartment must seem contracted, after his own drawing-rooms. Then, too, there was something here, apart from furnishings—was it flowers, sunlight?—that gave the impression of freshness—was it something about the woman herself? She was laughing.

"Well, it was rather recent; two nights ago. I came up on the late train."

"But Chris——"

"Chris couldn't wait. I saw him off, and then I wrote up here. He suggested the town—his old New England, and so near New York. I shall be going down often."

Bainbridge shook his head. "He should have come to see me," he said, sharply. "We were always good friends."

"Yes, every one likes Chris," she answered.

"Oh, every one likes Chris," he echoed, with a recurrence of the earlier contempt.

As she moved slightly, the light fell on her face, and he observed with astonishment there were threads of gray in the hair at her temples. She could not be over twenty-eight; and Pyrrha, who had celebrated her fortieth birthday, was in the full flush of matronly beauty—not a line upon her classic brow. So marrying Chris had brought its cares, after all! Contempt turned into resentment. He could see his cousin in all his languid poses—the long hair, the long, aristocratic fingers—the veriest idler that ever scribbled reams of nonsense, and called it comedies, and pretended it was his own fault that they were never produced—calmly departing for Europe and leaving his wife to locate herself anyhow! He could see also the woman coming up on that late train; taking her ticket bravely at the window, and trudging with her hand-bag down the platform in the flaring electric light—a lonely figure in the crowds. He ground the next words savagely through his teeth: "Still writing plays, I suppose. Why didn't you go with him?"

"He likes to be alone sometimes. I am trying to negotiate for a theatre. I would like to be a manager."

"Indeed?" Bainbridge looked down at his ungloved hand on the chair-arm, a dry-looking, wrinkled hand—no long, aristocratic fingers there. "It would be convenient for testing the comedies. And you wouldn't be the first to fail."

"I know. There is nothing decided. It might not be necessary. He might arrange a production in London . . . But you give me no chance to ask about your family. Mrs. Bainbridge—?"

"In her usual good health. My daughter is away. My wife thought you might go back with me."

"I should love to, but I have writing to do—for Chris. It must go by next steamer."

Bainbridge rose. "I won't press you to desert work; there will be other days. Elm Ridge is not a bad place. High ground—we can see twenty miles . . . Pyrrha will be disappointed, but I'll tell her you'll come later." He held her hand briefly, and did not look back until he was steaming down the hill. At that distance, she appeared about the age of his daughter.

Pyrrha met him at the hall-door—the house was finely Colonial. It had grown much warmer, and his wife in organdie and valenciennes was pleasant to look at.

"Alone?" she murmured.

He made irrelevant response: "What is the formula? What do you do to keep your beauty?"

She drew back. "My dear Duke! I hope you found Cousin Elise well and happy."

"There are some secrets of your sex, my dear, a man may never penetrate. Happiness is illusory."

"Cousin Christopher is away?"

"Gone to London."

"She must be lonely. I shall drive over to-morrow."

"Better wait. She is busy with some rubbish of his."

"Poor Elise!" said Pyrrha.

Bainbridge spent the afternoon in his library among numerous rare editions whose cost at least he knew. He moved about the room restlessly, regretting he had not gone to the city. He went in every day or two in hot weather. It broke the monotony. Sometimes he wished Pyrrha cared more for society. Perhaps if she were gayer they might whirl with the rest. Myrtle would soon be old enough—he broke off impatiently and changed his seat. His glance had rested on a life-size painting of his first wife—a painting made from an old photograph at Pyrrha's express desire, a gift from her to his daughter, Myrtle. At Pyrrha's desire it had been hung in the library. On another wall was a picture of similar size of herself. He had objected to the reproduction of that old photograph, a poor likeness at best. "But the best you have," urged

Pyrrha. Friends of hers had thought it lovely; Bainbridge respected the magnanimity, but the reproduced picture simpered, and Pyrrha on the other wall was superb.

Pyrrha had been consistently considerate of his daughter. Once, on a day of many irritations, he had felt a sense of revolt against so much sweetness; had known an insane wish, that had passed quickly, for some one who could be irritable also and quiver in sympathy, as he was quivering with nerves—a mad longing for some one to be hasty, even jealous. He had read of a woman burning her husband's first wife's picture. That, or a cross word to the child and afterward remorseful amends—in short, human warmth. At the time he knew the wish was insane. In the heavy glass of a bookcase he saw his own reflection, tall and strongly built, the squarish outline of his face, the hair, reddish-brown, thinning at the temples, and the sandy mustache, with paler streaks. His friends told him he was ten years his own junior. He turned away, impatiently, and took up a magazine in which he might read all he cared for—the advertisements.

When Elise came promptly to return Pyrrha's call, the lady was in the library talking with her husband. As Rawson, the butler, departed, Bainbridge uttered a faint sigh, and his wife regarded him sympathetically. "I am so sorry," she murmured. "You don't think she can be—in need of—?"

"What!" He sprang up, electrified.

"My dear Duke! You are not angry! I only meant—I feared—she is not dressed as would indicate prosperity."

"Come," he cried, imperiously. Stung to the core, he astonished Pyrrha, and even himself, by his cordial greeting of the guest. He took the lead, made her rest, then go out with them under the magnificent elms, where the sun was hardly felt; showed her the greenhouses, ordered the gardener to cut exquisite flowers for her.

Returning to the house, he dropped back to observe what, if anything, could justify Pyrrha's suspicions. But he could detect nothing. Elise's gown was quiet. Beside Pyrrha's perfect figure hers was that of an undeveloped school-girl. She had beautiful hair—it shone like newly fallen chestnuts in the sun. As they reached the house Elise spoke of the next train, and Pyrrha at once declared that Duke must take her home in the runabout; they could carry the flowers so nicely.

"Cousin Clayton," said Elise, as the auto descended into the first hollow, "I was trying to recall your middle name. I know Chris always calls you 'Duke.'"

He set the brake sharply, then let the auto go again. "Big stone there. That's just a nickname. Somebody started it from Pyrrha and Deucalion in—in ancient history, I guess. Short and convenient."

"Yes," said Elise, vaguely. "Perhaps you mean mythology. Weren't they unusually good people?" She looked at the flowers on her lap. "What a splendid mass! I am afraid you are always too generous."

"I am the most selfish being on earth," he answered.

She turned quickly, and their eyes met. He had read of just such deep blue eyes in foolish novels.

"You may think so," she said, softly.

When Bainbridge, a few days later, was passing out to Forty-second street from the special car in which he and others of his kind made daily trips to town, he overtook Elise, who had been in an ordinary coach. As they exchanged greetings, he was looking her over with confused recollections of things Pyrrha had said: "Cousin Elise is no less esteemed by us—for a gown that had been cleaned it really looked very well. Such materials always shrink. And *glacés* gloves some persons think less *chic*. I confess, I prefer a fresh glove, even if it is *glacé*, rather than a soiled *suède*. Her devotion to her husband is incomparable"

He observed that the gown Elise now wore was quite fresh; it was thin, brownish, with little dots and considerable white at the neck. He invited her to have luncheon with him later on, saying there was much he desired to know about the new play. And she stammering her reply, he quickly settled it by naming a restaurant well up town.

He was there when she arrived, and, fancying she looked troubled, he chose a seat in a remote, cool corner. When she remarked, embarrassedly, "I thought perhaps Cousin Pyrrha would come down to join us," he replied, with faint amusement, "Pyrrha? No earthly inducement would bring Pyrrha to town in this weather." Then, becoming brusque, he said: "You ought not to be running around in this heat. I don't know what Chris is thinking about."

"But I do," she smiled; "he is thinking of his comedy."

"The prospects of its success, or——?"

"Oh, there must not be any 'or,'" she answered, sobering perceptibly.

He saw that here was something difficult even over glasses of the best white wine, and he fell back on other topics; spoke of a new cactus for his greenhouses, of his daughter's return, and a narrow escape she had had from a runaway accident. He felt, as he told of the girl's grave predicament, a singular sensation awakening within him. His eyes were fixed on Elise's face, and he saw her own dilate, her color fade, then come back with a rush, the tears gush up. It was a sensation of triumph that he felt—of exultation. At last he had found that which he had long craved—the real, the human. He wanted to reach over and crush her hand in his grasp.

"You see," he said, presently, "I am selfish. I think only of my own interests, and yet I came here to speak of yours. You stir my curiosity when you say there must not be any 'or.' Are you sure of the outcome, or—is he looking for a backer over there?" The words seemed to have rushed out

brutally. And to be brutal was the last thing he had intended.

But she relieved him by answering, quietly: "Yes, I think he is."

"Why didn't he come to me?" he demanded.

A queer, half-frightened smile clutched her face. "No, no; not that!" she answered, incoherently.

"It would have done no harm," he insisted, "to talk the matter over." He wondered if his voice sounded as gentle as he wanted it to sound. "I would be the last one to encourage him, the last one to offer him or any one else a dollar to help toward ruin. But if a thing had merit and only needed pushing—that was my idea."

She replied, sighing deeply: "It *has* merit; it simply has got to have merit."

They were in the train going home when Elise put a dubious question: "And Cousin Pyrrha, would she approve?"

The shadowy smile that was on his face in the restaurant trembled there once more. "Well, you might ask her," he said. "But Pyrrha never interferes in any project of mine; she would probably say, 'What do I know of such things? It is purely my husband's affair.'"

When he got off, as she begged he would, at his own station, leaving her to go on alone to hers, they had agreed on a further talk after she received news from Chris.

Bainbridge found friends of his wife prolonging the afternoon tea. His daughter came out to stroll with him under the elms. "Will you go with me to-morrow to call on Cousin Elise?" he asked. "I saw her to-day in town. I was telling her of your escape. She showed very kind feeling—she will be glad to see you."

"I shall be glad to see her—if mama consents," the girl replied.

Late that evening, to Bainbridge reading alone in the library, recurred the words of Elise as to Pyrrha's approval. Sudden compunction or instinct of right acting impelled him to

consult his wife. He knew she would raise no objections—ought he not at least to present the subject? He wondered if she had retired. Their apartments were quite separate. From the day of their marriage Pyrrha had maintained the same elegance of reserve. Afterward, he tried not to remember what at worst was merely a disagreeable crossing of his tastes, a trivial surprise—a nothing.

He had tapped twice and received no response. He was turning away, when he heard his wife's voice addressing her maid. The door opened softly, and his wife stood revealed in *négligée*. He recoiled. "Good God!" he cried. "What is the matter? What are those—on your face?" The door was closed again quickly. Her answer came muffled through the wood: "I have retired."

He made his way back to the library, his own countenance on fire. He remembered a picture in an advertisement, of a woman's face curiously adorned with shapes of sticking-plaster—yes, sticking-plaster. They were supposed to prevent wrinkles at the corners of the eyes and mouth, between the brows, across the forehead. Good heavens! With all her beauty—her fresh fairness—was she going to sleep with those horrible, disfiguring . . . ? In that instant of confrontment, Pyrrha seemed to have flung him thousands of miles away from her. He remained in his library until he heard the cocks crowing.

Days passed, and weeks. Bainbridge took his daughter to see Elise, and the call was returned, and Pyrrha was more lovely and amiable than ever. He drifted into the habit of going over to Hawthorne Hill and sometimes taking Myrtle. Elise's attitude toward his daughter had charmed him without his knowing it. There was an unconscious delight in him that Myrtle liked her very much—was indeed becoming warmly attached to her. Elise had again asked him to wait for further news from Chris, and, chafing, he had agreed. He was certain things

were at lowest ebb. These frequent journeys across, these extravagant caprices, this absolute indifference to financial matters—their capital had been eaten. It was the verge of ruin. Had it been only Chris he would not have cared—much. But this delicate woman? Myrtle had brought him innocent tales. "She was trimming over a hat, papa. I think it too bad she has to be so economical. If you didn't object, papa, and mama didn't think it out of place, I would love to give her a handsome hat—as a present."

"Yes, yes, my dear. Only—not a hat, you know." He was fumbling with papers. "If she has made one she might feel hurt. Anything else? Why not a box of gloves? Find out the size and the kind she prefers, and I'll attend to it in town for you." He hurried off to the station, unwilling to consider the emotions within him. He felt so strangely sensitive about the hat she had trimmed over.

It was a hazy morning. From the station he could see yellow mists over the inlet. It would be very warm again. He was conscious of quickening heart and pulse. What was the matter? A thought fluttered in him like the beat of wings. Good heavens! Was he, Clayton Bainbridge, a man of fifty, twice a husband, sensible in most things—? He stopped. He felt that he had come face to face with something hitherto unknown, and that its strangeness possessed him, and—its joy.

He knew that she had expected to go to town by this train. It was coming now through the curve. He boarded the smoker, and went through coach after coach until he had come to the last, the special car. There was nothing for him to do but go in and take his seat, as usual. He hardly saw the porter touch his cap. She was not aboard.

He did not remain long in town. Late that afternoon he was seeking her once more on Hawthorne Hill. He made her go out for a ride with him. On the edge of the town, he stopped.

He could not talk and manage the run-about. They alighted, and sat on a low stone wall. His hand sought hers, unconsciously. He said that it had been a hideous day in town. If she had only wired him—'phoned to him that she had missed the train! He had feared everything—illness—accidents——

Silent, she sat looking down. He drank in the air in deep breaths. The atmosphere had for him a velvety quality, after hours of gnawing unrest. It flowed around him like a peaceful sea. Finally, when she spoke of a possible letter, as a steamer was in, he stood up, still holding her hand.

"But, letter or no letter," he said, "there are matters we must talk of. You must come to town to-morrow—in the afternoon, and we will have dinner, and go over the whole business. The afternoon post will be up from the city before you start—I am going to take hold of things for you. It is right for me to do it, and I am happy in thinking that I can do it better than any outsider. No one else would have the confidence. I understand Chris so well. And you may trust me."

"Yes," she said, softly. "But we must go back now."

"You should take the express that arrives about six, and come direct to the place where we shall dine—not that other. I have written the address on a slip. I shall give it to you when I leave you—sit close to me for steadiness. I am going to make the run back very fast." He was trembling as he left her at the door with the slip of paper in her fingers.

Early that morning, he had telephoned his order for dinner in the private dining-room, and by five o'clock the day seemed long. In the elevated station, he saw, too, that it had been hot. The crowds were hateful. He shielded himself in a corner of the car, and closed his eyes. He was weary and fretful as a child, but to the hour approaching he looked for rest and peace. In the safe shelter of that

room might he not feel a gentle hand upon his forehead, soothing tumultuous thoughts? Yes, he had found the solution of a monstrous discontent. For years—the best part of his life—he had been giving and not receiving; dumbly offering, dumbly half-expecting. Only now had come response. To be answered—to reach out and clasp a hand that gave back pressure! Ah, heaven! It was the end forever of the old, dull round—it was the beginning of life!

The table was already laid in the quiet room, and there were flowers. The servant, coming in, gave him a respectful bow. He looked at the man, and saw it was a waiter who had often served him at a down-town place. "What, you here, Peters? You'll see that we are well looked after. Mrs. Bainbridge will be here soon—a little change for us from the country." Pyrrha had never been at the down-town place.

"Yes, sir," the man said, and vanished.

Bainbridge moved about the room, and gazed out of the window. The dusty streets seemed frantically joyous. Why had he not told her to take a cab and drive at full speed?

By his watch, she was a half-hour late. Some one tapped, and his heart stood still. Again the waiter. "Not yet, Peters—have the clams covered solid with ice."

His throat was parched. If there had been an accident! Why had he not arranged that she leave the train at the upper station and avoid the tunnel? She would have telephoned him—everything was all right up to five o'clock. If she had missed the train she would have taken the next. More trains stopped at her station than at his own.

It was ten minutes past seven, and the waiter had looked in once more. Surely she must come now. She would not fear to come—she had not thought—he did not recognize himself; his frame shook.

Peters had returned, and in his hand was a letter. The man went out dis-

creetly while Bainbridge read, standing by the window. It was not yet dark.

I waited for the last mail, and a letter came from Chris. He returned yesterday. He felt too ill to come or send any word. The heat had prostrated him. He went at once to Atlantic City, and wrote me to join him there. I am writing on the train, for I am going to him. What else could I do? You will not think I did not come because I did not care—for I do care. And you must not be involved in any way for my sake. Not *you*, not *you*! Any one else, if help we must have when the worst comes. But not *you*! And you must understand and know that I do care.

His ears were filled with roaring; he felt his voice would be thick. He caught his hat, and rushed to the door; the waiter met him. He flung a bill to the man with inarticulate words; then he hurried down the stairs, and ran to get away from the place.

By running, he had somehow lessened his horrible excitement. He realized that his fury was unjustifiable, the while he heard some secret, mocking voice: "Deucalion, the most upright of men, and Pyrrha, the most virtuous of women." That cursed hypocrisy to which he must go back! Why had she done this? Why tortured him? No, no, he would not believe that she had written her husband to return. Why should she take help from any one else? How could her words be true, "It is because I do care!" Had she meant that she would not trust him—or herself—ah! Was it confession?

He stepped, exhausted, from the train at his station, and saw under the platform-lamps the white frock and scarlet jacket of his daughter.

"I drove down alone for you, papa," she explained. "I thought you might come. I knew you would not scold me."

He roused himself. "Well?"

"Cousin Elise has gone away. Cousin Christopher has returned. I know she will never come back."

"Ah!" he muttered; "ah!"

"Yes—papa, you are not angry because I came alone? The pony is safe."

"No." His own body had not ceased from quivering in revolt; how should he blame the child beside him? He took the reins, and drove in silence down the slope and under the bridge. He could not speak. The girl's unhappiness pieced out his own. He drove up the hill along the quiet roads. When at length they had entered their own grounds, he heard, like something far in the night, the desolate plaint of his daughter: "She had to go, of course. But I thought that I had found a friend. It is a terrible thing to think that you have found a friend and then to lose her."

The cart stopped for them to alight.

"Have you ever been disappointed, papa?" the girl persisted.

He laughed—a grating laugh. "Oh, yes, I have been disappointed—and it hurt me, too!"



TESTIMONIAL FOR INSOMNIA CURE

DEAR SIR—My husband could not sleep,
And vainly sought release;
He took one bottle of your cure,
And now he rests in peace.

THE ALPHABET

A WONDROUS thing, the alphabet,
 As doubtless you'll agree.
 No honey from the B we get,
 No water from the C.

The J has never built a nest;
 No pod enfolds the P;
 And there is nothing to suggest
 A — beyond the D.

No oysters has the R to sell;
 No pupil has the I;
 No house adjoins the modest L;
 No question asks the Y.

The X is never cross; and O
 From debt is wholly free;
 And cockney H you'd only know
 By its apostrophe.

No type is measured by the M;
 No sugar spoils the T;
 No Dutchman fashions dykes to stem
 The inrush of the Z.

No lambkin tags behind the U;
 The U—no wool has she;
 No Chinaman up-braids the Q;
 No Scottish tears sheds E.

The F is sharp, if not acute;
 And A is flat, it's true;
 While G and N with K dispute
 The ownership of { Gnu
 New
 Knew.

The S its \$ counts as nought;
 But VV, to me
 Suggests that for these rhymes I ought
 To get a double—"V."

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



CHAUFFEUR—I tell you what it is, old man, the automobile has come to stay.
 CHAFFER—That's just what I complain of. I can't get mine to go!

OUT INTO THE WORLD

By Tom Masson

IT was in Cairo that they first met, in a narrow street, amid a motley collection of Arabs and native Egyptians, Dervishes and Orientals. She and her mother found themselves straying one day from their hotel.

"May I assist you?" he observed; and, thankfully accepting his proffered aid, they had permitted him to escort them to a place of safety.

It could not have been long after this that they came across each other again in Rome. There is a little, straggling Roman street, or way, that leads off from the Coliseum.

It was there that their eyes met. His were large and dark and grave; hers blue and a trifle confused.

She inclined her head. He bowed, with a half-smile.

This incident, however, put him in a different mood for the rest of the day. He wondered at what hotel she was stopping. He wondered where she came from, whither she was going. He had started out on his travels months before, with a vague, undefined sense of loneliness, a desire for companionship.

New York, he thought, was the most lonesome place in the world. Perhaps he would run across some one, somewhere, who would be a treasure of friendship, or love—who could tell?

And now that he had seen her, he felt, somehow, that she would fulfil these requirements. This girl, with the serene blue eyes that yet showed depths of humor and courage and that certain quality of innate refinement which reflects itself from some eyes, disturbed him greatly.

Who was she?

It was going down the Rhine that they met again.

He became conscious of a gaze—what is the subtle psychology of that look beaming upon us from the unknown? He had turned, and there indeed she was, with the golden sunset gleam lighting up her almost classic face—classic save for the rather large mouth which, when she smiled, gave to her features just the irregularity that was needed.

He bowed again, and in a few moments more found himself seated by the ladies' side, talking commonplace language, and thinking uncommonplace thoughts.

When they met again, it was in Paris, if not by appointment, at least by the aid of a certain sort of understanding. She had remarked casually that they expected to be in Paris on a certain date, and he had replied that he was glad that this was so, for he expected to be there himself at that time, although only at that instant his determination to do this had defined itself.

In Cairo and Rome they were to each other merely travelers from the same land, bound together by the distant claims of patriotism. On the Rhine, they were acquaintances. In Paris, they became friends, and then—

On the homeward voyage, when, one night, they stood by the rail and watched the moon come up over the waters, he held her hand in his, and said:

"Dearest, I knew that if I went out into the world I should find you; I

knew it instinctively—I must have known it. I was so lonesome living all those years in New York by myself—and now, to think I have found you, at last!”

And she replied:

“Do you know, I felt much the same way. I too, was lonesome. No one in New York seemed to satisfy my longings. I sometimes wonder why we have never met before.”

He smiled. “Do you want to know the reason?” he asked. “I can tell you, for the other day your mother told me the street and the number where you lived.”

“Indeed,” she said, “what has that to do with it? What is the reason?”

“Because,” he replied, with a smile, “all these years I have lived next door to you.”



DOING HIS BEST

GAYEBOYE—I understand that Wildeboye's father left him nothing.

HIGHFLYER—Nothing but his debts.

GAYEBOYE—So? And how is the youngster getting on?

HIGHFLYER—Very nicely, indeed. He's managed to increase his legacy by thirty thousand!



THE RETORT DISCOURTEOUS

SHE—So you told Miss Youngblood that you thought she was more interesting than I?

HE—Yes; but I never thought she was interesting, anyway.



THEIR GAIN—NOT OURS

FIRST THEATREGOER—This play was taken from the Italian.

SECOND DITTO—Lucky Italians!



“THE widow is talking ambiguously.”
“Yes—with a *double entente*.”